New Statesman

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Duncan Campbell: fast breeder dangers

COLD WAR

Godfrey Hodgson reviews Fred Halliday's latest book

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New Statesman

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New Statesman

Vol 106 No 2737 2 September 1983

Begin's bitter legacy

WHEN AMERICAN troops first landed in the Lebanon in July of last year our Washington correspondent's view was that President Reagan had been 'sandbagged' by the Israelis. The Begin government had encouraged the White House to prepare a contingency plan for US intervention and had then leaked news of it in order to precipitate events. The Begin government's aim was to force the Americans to force Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation to withdraw from the Lebanon and then to hold the ring while Lebanese presidential elections were organised so as to produce a Maronite Christian victor, who would co-operate with Israel and make no substantial concessions to the Moslems. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger and others made it quite clear that there was no intention of keeping American troops in the Lebanon a moment longer than that. Little more than a year later that Israeli-American policy is in tatters. As we and others predicted, the Americans (like the Syrians before them) were certain to be caught in the political and actual cross-fire between Lebanese Christians and Moslems, which Israeli policy had been seeking to promote.

Politicians and political commentators are loath to admit in public that some problems may not have a solution, at least in any foreseeable future. A politician like President Reagan, with no sense or sensitivity in foreign affairs, is constantly searching for some short-term initiative (usually involving the show or use of force) that will overnight resolve the unresolvable. But even if President Carter's Camp David efforts to bring stability to the Middle East must now be seen as illusory, the record of the Begin government has been to make the situation in the region substantially worse. So has the total failure of Washington to use any of its influence to moderate the intransigence of the majority of the Begin cabinet.

Of course Israel has a security problem. The depth of that problem is ignored by Israel's enemies and underestimated by most outside observers. The original sponsors of the State of Israel failed to face up to the consequences of creating a small political entity with militarily unviable frontiers in a hostile Arab environment. The world has been living with the consequences of that failure ever since. Any Israeli government (even one dominated by the present Labour opposition) would take uncompromising positions on the military integrity of the West Bank. But the historic failure of the Begin government has been the way in which it has systematically destroyed every seed of a possible long-term *political* settlement to the continuing crisis of the Middle East. The historic failure of the Reagan Administration is that it has actively connived in this sterile policy, partly out of political deference to the Jewish lobby in domestic politics as another presidential election year got nearer, and partly out of its simplistic analysis of the nature of Soviet intentions in the area.

Begin embraced an imperialist policy as the solution to Israel's security problem, proposed to him by his then defence minister and his generals. The invasion of Lebanon which resulted has been a military as well as a moral disaster. Instead of facing a disciplined PLO – with which from a position of strength some slow political negotiation might have been possible – Begin's last act has been to order the Israeli withdrawal from northern Lebanon and Beirut, leaving behind political and military chaos. His political epitaph is that he destroyed what was left of the state of Lebanon and deeply divided public opinion in Israel on foreign policy for the first time since Israel was founded. □

Alternatives cancelled

A GREAT deal more fuss should have been made about Channel 4's decision to axe the *Friday Alternative* current affairs programme. It is part of the insidious process of kowtowing to the prejudices about the media that those in high places sense coming from No 10 Downing Street. For whatever rationalisation Channel 4 and its chairman, Edmund Dell, cobble together after the event, the real reason is that the programme has been producing journalism that the establishment does not like. Above all, it did not like – and thought that Boadicea would in due course punish it for – analysis of the way the programme's journalists were manipulated by the propaganda and press services of the Ministry of Defence during the Falklands War. To its eternal shame, the IBA singled out the *Friday Alternative* for criticism in its annual report – the same IBA that uttered not a whisper of disquiet when TV-am unilaterally tore up its IBA franchise to produce a morning programme 'based mainly but not exclusively on news and current affairs' and dived to save its shareholders' money by transmitting a safe diet of pap.

What was a fourth channel supposed to be created for, if not to provide innovative, usually low budget, television of a kind not provided by the other three channels? News and current affairs on the BBC and ITV-1 are well established within the straitjacket of the concept of 'balance'. News and current affairs on British television are of a higher standard than most, but the concept of balance means that programme producers are under constant and growing pressure in practice to stay within the spectrum of conventional politics and news. Someone with radical views on sex must be balanced by Mrs Whitehouse. A trade union leader's criticism of employers must be answered by a 'talking head' put up by the CBI. A programme on poachers must add an interview with a gamekeeper. With so much 'balance' about, the hope was that Channel 4 at least might be allowed (even encouraged) to push a little at the bounds of BBC/ITV convention. The fate of the *Friday Alternative* and of Ken Loach's series of programmes presenting a left-wing view of the trade union movement (which the IBA is refusing to show until it too has been 'balanced') shows that the hope was misplaced. □

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'Awkward questions' about nuclear waste dumping

THE MINISTRY of Defence is planning to dump plutonium waste at sea in quantities which could be in contravention of international regulations. Yet the government's main concern is not with safety, but with how to disguise the plan from the public.

A confidential minute of a meeting of senior government scientists and officials has been leaked to Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace and passed to the *New Statesman*. It records disagreement between the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF), which oversees sea dumping, and the Ministry of Defence (MoD) at a meeting on 28 January this year.

In a discussion of how to dispose of 'special waste' from the Aldermaston weapons establishment, it emerges that the MoD is proposing to use new larger waste drums each containing up to 500 grammes of plutonium. MAFF is worried that any waste containing such high proportions of plutonium could 'create problems' with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the body that regulates all sea dumping. The IAEA could define Aldermaston's planned consignments as high-level waste which would render them 'unsuitable for sea dumping'. The plutonium content was a problem 'because any suggestion that the UK was dumping high-level waste could imperil the whole future of sea dumping'. Britain's current policy of dumping low-level waste has already been condemned internationally, while this year's dumping operation, scheduled for July, has been prevented by a trade union boycott (see *NS* 1 July 1983).

The change to larger drums worries MAFF mostly from a public relations point of view. The chairman of the meeting, senior MAFF civil servant Mr H. R. Neilson, pointed out that 'the inclusion of a small number of new larger size packages would attract attention and might lead to awkward questions about the contents and the origin of the packages'. The meeting concluded that 'there was nothing fundamentally objectionable about the size of the package itself, apart from the fact that it might attract undue attention'.

The meeting took place immediately before the United Nations-sponsored London Dumping Convention's majority vote against any form of sea dumping of radioactive waste pending a scientific investigation. Aware of this possibility, and anxious to minimise any problems with Britain's intention to continue dumping, MAFF stressed the need to ensure the 'highest standards' of practice.

But the minute makes it clear that there were substantial disagreements between MAFF and the MoD about the form in which the waste should be packaged. MAFF insisted that it had to be encased in concrete, but the MoD complained that this had never previously been necessary. Mr Neilson of MAFF pointed out that the Central Electricity Generating Board had accepted this method and that it would be wrong to treat MoD wastes differently. The MoD said that they would prefer not to have to change their practice as this would entail 'serious disadvantages', including additional radiation doses for some workers. Eventually the meeting agreed somewhat vaguely that the MoD should 'move towards' MAFF-preferred practice.

Rob Edwards

Love thy neighbours

FOLLOWING revelations in *Searchlight* magazine and the *Daily Mirror* that 50 Warwick Square in London's West End, home of Government minister Nicholas Ridley,

Nicholas Ridley: oblivious

was the address of a tour company owned by members of the National Front, it would seem that links between the late-Georgian house, the extreme right and certain members of the Conservative Party go deeper.

The *Mirror* stated that 50 Warwick Square was the base for Italian fascist Roberto Fiore, a man who faces serious charges related to terrorist activity in Italy, and for National Front activists Nicholas Griffin and Michael Walker who owned 'Heritage' tours. The house is divided into four flats, and Ridley claims that he was unaware that anything strange was going on. But the Westminster National Front election address was published from 50 Warwick Square, and although this information was clearly printed on the leaflet nobody in the Tory party hierarchy noticed the coincidence. Nor did Ridley observe the comings and goings of assorted high-ranking fascists in the building, or a physical assault on a photographer outside the house.

One Conservative party member who *did* know what was going on was Gareth Light, Membership Secretary and Political Officer of Westminster Young Conservatives. Light shared a flat with the three men and took messages for Heritage tours. His political involvement however does not stop with the Young Conservatives; he is a committee member of the Young Monday Club and a frequent letter writer to *Focal Point*, the journal of 'revisionist' historian David Irving. In June 1982 he wrote of a 'black invasion' and how he was 'impressed by *Focal Point*', a magazine which questions the details of the Nazi holocaust. Next month he placed an advertisement in the publication for accommodation for a 'Nationalist Graduate, 23' – the result was a place in the Warwick Square flat.

When questioned about his involvement with the fascist right, Light stated that 'I came in here to get to know how the NF worked, to get behind the scenes, with the Jewish Defence League . . .' The Jewish Defence League is an extremist group which does not exist in Britain, and it is most unlikely that Light could be involved with them. When asked for the name of their leader he did not know.

One man who does know a little about the Jewish Defence League is far right MP Harvey Proctor, who mentioned them in a parliamentary speech. It was Proctor who introduced Light to the Monday Club 'in his Fulham flat'. When Light was further questioned about his contact with Proctor he refused to comment.

Westminster Young Conservatives chairman Harry Phibbs sees the entire incident as 'an unfortunate coincidence; after all, I know people who live with members of the Labour party, it doesn't make them socialists'. Heritage owner Michael Walker denied any infiltration of his organisation, adding 'Gareth is politically naive, but no way is he deceiving us . . or if he is he's a very good actor indeed'. Light is about to leave for the United States but Heritage tours have no intention of leaving. 'Why should we?' they said. 'This all suits us very well.'

Mike Coren

Privileged prisoner

NOT ALL PRISONERS, it seems, have cause to complain about conditions in British prisons. According to sources within Maidstone prison, self-confessed South African agent Peter Caselton has been given one of the most privileged jobs available to any prisoner.

Within weeks of coming to Maidstone prison, Peter Caselton has been made a 'blue band'. Normal trustee prisoners, 'red bands', are given certain positions of trust and allowed slightly greater freedom of movement within a prison, but are locked up in cells and generally come under the same regime as other prisoners.

Blue band prisoners have much greater privileges. They are allowed almost complete freedom of movement within a prison, are not required to be supervised and are entrusted even with the job of escorting other prisoners from one part of a prison to another. There are very few such prisoners and normally they are prisoners coming to the end of their sentence and with an unblemished record.

Caselton, however, was made a blue band soon after arrival at Maidstone. He is living in the hospital ward rather than a cell and is therefore not locked up. He has unlimited access to the facilities of the hospital ward which include television, a shower unit and a flushing toilet. He has the freedom of the prison and therefore unrestricted association. This is a world away from the degrading regime of slopping out, lock-up, menial prison work, restricted association and exercise which is the lot of most prisoners.

Peter Caselton and Edward Aspinall pleaded guilty, at their trial at the Old Bailey on 17 December last year, to a series of charges including conspiracy. The charges were related to a series of break-ins at the London offices of SWAPO, the African National Congress and the Pan African Congress. Caselton was sentenced to four years and Aspinall to 18 months imprisonment. The trial unfolded a story of South African espionage directed against known, or suspected, opponents of the apartheid regime.

In June 1982 British-born Caselton came into contact with Aspinall, a professional burglar, through an accredited South African diplomat, Joseph Klue. Klue was protected from any criminal proceedings by his diplomatic immunity which the South African Embassy refused to waive. It was Aspinall who carried out the break-ins.

Terry O'Halloran

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Barclays bankrolls arms for South Africa

97347 DELTA G
8-FC23 SA

97347 DELTA G 2/MAY/1980

TO D.STOFFBERG ESQ.

FROM M.ASPIN DELTA CO.

REF HYDRAULIC PARTS AS DEFINED BELOW
YOUR LETTER OF CREDIT BARCLAYS BANK LONDON NO 4421D11/80

QUANTITY	STOCK NO.	DESCRIPTION
50C	655705	AIR CLEANERS LESS ELBOWS.
50C	618530	ENGINE AND TRANSMISSION MOUNTS.
4+	88813	PINTLE SLEAVE ASSEMBLY

++ NEW AND UNUSED AND FOR EVALUEATION.

TOTAL VALUE US/DOLLARS 132.56C.
(ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY TWO THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED AND SIXTY USD.

Barclays arranges a letter of credit for South African arms dealer Dirk Stoffberg for $132,560-worth of 'hydraulic parts'

BARCLAYS BANK has helped to finance the export of arms from Britain to South Africa. The *NS* has obtained documents revealing how Barclays' South African subsidiary provided a credit for a $108,000 rifle sale to the regime. Barclays' headquarters in London says that its South African bank was unaware that the goods involved were arms.

Letter of credit no 442/ID 7368/79 was approved by Barclays National's Braamfontein branch in late 1979 for the import of 1,264 pieces of 'general merchandise'. This letter of credit should only have been paid when the purchaser, Johannesburg-based Armsel, had inspected and approved the goods on arrival in South Africa. But in Janary 1980 the bank says an error was made, and the $108,000 was prematurely released.

The consignment was delayed until 5 June 1980 and was then found to contain 1,000 used Colombian rifles which had been manufactured in the 1940s. These were not the weapons originally promised, and were of little use to the South African arms-buying agency.

Last October a trial at the Old Bailey revealed how three men had helped to ship a total of £1 million-worth of weapons from Britain to South Africa in defiance of the UN arms embargo. Leo Hammond, Michael Aspin and Robert Cherrett were all sentenced to prison. It was this trial, Barclays claim, that alerted the bank to the possibility that the 'general merchandise' had been rifles. Legal action has been initiated by the bank, but the money has not yet been recovered.

Further documents suggest that Barclays may have also been involved in other shipments in the £1 million series of deals. Again, however, the bank may not have known that weapons were involved. In May 1980 South African arms dealer Dirk Stoffberg arranged a Letter of Credit (4421/D 11/80) with Barclays for $132,560 worth of 'hydraulic spares'.

Barclays Bank in London insists that its South African subsidiary would 'not knowingly be involved in transations which contravened the arms embargo'. But the Old Bailey trial has raised doubts about the extent to which Barclays National has been monitoring its trade financing in order to avoid dealing in arms.

Martin Bailey

Political whip for civil servants

TWO MEMBERS of the biggest civil service union, the Civil and Public Servants Association (CPSA), are being charged with a breach of disciplinary code after urging members of their union branch to vote Labour in the general election.

In May Ben Plouviez and Stephen Corbishley, the secretary and chair of the British Library (London) branch of the CPSA sent a confidential newsletter to their members containing an article headed: 'If you're a civil servant vote Labour'. The Library management has charged them with acting 'contrary to the British Library's code of conduct [in] conducting political activities on British Library premises'.

The pair are charged as union officers, not as individuals, which marks a break with past practice for civil service management. And the charge comes at a particularly sensitive time for the CPSA, which is balloting its 200,000 members on whether they want to affiliate to the Labour Party. Affiliation would be certain to arouse controversy over the wider issue of political activity in the civil service.

The 350-strong British Library branch sees the attack on its officers as victimisation, because it was the branch that proposed the motion to affiliate to the Labour Party at this year's conference, and because of a recent successful strike at the branch over 'staff inspections' (work evaluation exercises).

When we contacted the Library Director Lionel Bell, he was not very co-operative. 'Well, it's sub-judice isn't it? They've done wrong and that's all there is to it.' ■

MISCELLANY

Town hall tale

Last year Sheffield council, the model of enlightened left-wing local government, set up an 'employment department' to co-ordinate job creating initiatives in the city. In February this year Sheila Hill went to the council with an idea for a theatre project and £75,000. She had negotiated the money with the Manpower Services Commission, and hoped to create 17 jobs, but needed a building for the project – either rent free or very cheap. Could the council help? A simple enough question, but one which seemed impossible to answer. She was passed from one officer to another and from one committee to another, never knowing whether the council intended to back the project or not. She says secretaries did not know where their bosses were, and did not have the authority to make appointments for them. Councillors were always in meetings and letters went unanswered. Every attempt to pin down senior officers to find out whether a decision had been taken resulted in more evasions, deferrals and forms to fill in. After three months an officer telephoned to say the council had decided not to support the project, but couldn't give any reasons. Sheila went to see David Blunkett, leader of Sheffield council (second only to Ken Livingstone in the Pantheon of socialist council leaders), who was sympathetic and said he would see if there were any empty school buildings that could be used. Sheila was then offered a school (which she went to see) only to be told she couldn't have it. Then the same thing happened again. She was finally told the council *would* be able to provide premises for the project, if she waited for another 12 to 18 months. She, and the other two people who have been working virtually full-time since last August on the project, have now given up, and are leaving the £75,000 grant unclaimed. Sheila says she can understand how Terence Rafferty felt. He was the man who burst into a District Council planning committee meeting in Cornwall last month brandishing a shotgun and shouting: 'You've ruined my life – now some of you are going to pay for it.'

Standardised abuse

The *Standard*, which has been London's only evening newspaper since it took over the *Evening News* at the end of 1980, has chosen to use its monopoly in a campaign of constant vilification of Ken Livingstone – from the moment he took office in 1981. Its circulation has continued to fall, while Ken has remained as popular as ever. The significance of these facts has now dawned on its editor, Lou Kirby. Recently a particularly witless subeditor used 'Red Ken' in the headline for a story about Mr Livingstone's opinion of video nasties (they made him feel sick). A stern edict immediately issued from the editor's office. The epithet 'Red Ken' was not to be used when referring to Mr Livingstone. Not in headlines. Not in picture captions. Not in text. Not ever.

Errata (continued)

Humbly admitting our fallibility, we take this earliest opportunity to correct a mistake we made in last week's *Miscellany* column. We accused the new *Times Guide to the House of Commons* of electing Tory David Croft to Liverpool city council at the age of 17. In fact Mr Croft is a Liberal. Would that Times Books, the *Guide's* publishers, were so modest. We noted last week that they had Toby Jessel elected to the GLC eight years before it was set up. This mistake was first made in the 1974 edition of the *Guide*, and has been repeated both in the 1979 edition and this year's. Worse, Sir Ian Gilmour's fictitious by-election has appeared in every edition of the *Guide* since 1970.

Maintenance payments

Conservative councillors in the London borough of Wandsworth have as expected pulled back from terminating the council's garden maintenance contract with Pritchard Industrial Services, despite the revelation that the company's performance has been many times worse than at first thought. The actual text of the contract was made available last week, and it shows that in each of the eight fortnightly cycles since council inspectors

started awarding financial penalties against Pritchards, the company has run up at least ten times the number needed to be thrown off the contract. We calculate that by 15 August Pritchards could have been sacked 128 times over for failing to do the job properly.

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Secret job cuts in the British Gas pipeline

THE 'EFFICIENCY STUDY' of British Gas finances carried out by accountants Deloitte Haskins and Sells, as well as recommending a rise in the price of gas, secretly urges a nationally-coordinated plan to deal with compulsory redundancies.

An unexcised version of the accountants' report, obtained by *Accountancy Age* magazine, reveals that British Gas 'is considering whether a number of Regions will have to declare compulsory redundancies in 1983'. This contrasts starkly with the corporation's official line, for example in its recent annual report, which forecast a further decline in staffing over the next five years and said: 'Most of this reduction is expected to be achieved through natural wastage.'

The unexcised version of the report, which went to British Gas chairman Sir Denis Rooke and to the Secretary of State for Energy Peter Walker in June, says in its preamble that it 'contains various passages which for commercial or other reasons should be excised in the published version'. One of the cuts follows a paragraph which says that British Gas is concentrating on 'redeploying and retraining employees, early retirement and voluntary redundancies'. This is the version that has been issued to the press and the unions. The uncut version continues with a discussion of compulsory redundancies. 'It is important that such redundancies are coordinated nationally,' warn Deloittes, 'as they are unlikely to be an isolated event in a single Region'.

A table, for the eyes of Rooke and Walker only, reveals which Regions are most at risk. North Thames and North East are expected to lose 1,500 and 500 jobs respectively by 1987. British Gas's revised plans this year are expected to require a further 6.000 jobs overall, say Deloittes, and their recommendations will produce even further staffing reductions.

The need for a secret coordinated plan to deal with compulsory redundancies arises from British Gas's approach to industrial relations, which the consultants praise. The corporation's tactic is to insist to the unions that its Regions are separate and should be negotiated with separately. This enables sensitive negotiations to be fractured into 12 different processes. If the corporation admitted that compulsory redundancies were centrally-planned, the unions would gain leverage by insisting on central negotiations.

The unions' reaction to the published version of the report has been unfavourable enough. The General and Municipal workers' union (GMB), which represents most of the manual staff, regards it as 'part of the government's softening-up process before privatisation', according to Frank Cottam, national officer for the gas industry.

John Rentoul

It takes two to Euro-tango

AS LIBERAL MPs play down the effect of splits over David Steel's leadership of the party, one issue looks certain to provoke further ructions at the party's assembly in Harrogate later this month. Next year's elections to the European Parliament are set to divide it from its SDP partners.

According to Tony Greaves, secretary of the Association of Liberal Councillors (ALC), 'Most Liberals couldn't care less about the European elections.' The ALC believes that the party stands no chance of winning any seats next June as long as Euro-elections are fought on the first-past-the-post system. It is reluctant to sink any money into the campaign because it believes voters will have ample opportunity to register their protest votes at council elections in both England and Scotland only six weeks earlier. Indeed, the Liberal Party's European fund is likely only to be able to make grants of £200 per Euro-constituency.

There is a feeling among many Liberals at constituency level that mostly SDP candidates should be put forward to face the humiliation of the inevitable defeat. Greaves commented: 'The Liberal Party has no clear idea of what it would want a European MP to be.' There appears to be a wide gulf between grassroots Liberal activism in the constituencies, and the national issues of relations with the SDP and the Alliance's EEC policy.

In a belated effort to handle the problem, Liberal Party chiefs have ordered regional officers to submit recommendations on how joint selection of candidates between the Alliance partners can take place.

Steel is against joint selection with the SDP and would prefer a carve-up negotiated at national level with David Owen, in which either party agrees to stand down in each constituency.

The ALC, a powerful dissident pressure group in the Liberal Party claiming 2,000 members, also intends at Harrogate to censure the general election arrangements with the SDP. But this should come as no surprise: less than two weeks before polling day the ALC wrote to all Liberal candidates urging them to drop Alliance policies and concentrate on Liberal aims.

John Hatton

Landlords fiddle social security

NOT ALL of Britain's 4½ million supplementary benefit claimants are also involved in the disastrous Housing Benefit scheme which is leaving one in eight households worse off. About 85,000 'boarders' at the very bottom of the social scale are victims of an even less fair system – one which at the same time enriches unscrupulous private landlords.

Because private landlords (like local councils) find the Housing Benefit scheme, which came into operation on 4 April, so difficult to operate, more tenants are being pushed into 'board and lodging' accommodation. Just by providing breakfast a landlord can take away all tenant rights, and ensure that high rents will be paid quickly by the DHSS.

The injustices of DHSS practice were made evident at the time of the 'Operation Major' swoop on claimants in Oxford in September last year, but the media chose instead to concentrate on stories of organised mass benefit fraud.

Unemployed boarders, who are provided with meals (usually breakfast) with their accommodation, are paid £1.35 for each lunch and dinner not provided by the landlord plus £8.50 a week for all other needs. In addition, the DHSS also pays their weekly rent, up to a local maximum figure. Where the rent is over the limit, claimants are usually paid the extra for between 4 and 13 weeks (depending on 'local office practice', the DHSS term for inconsistency), and so many landlords deliberately set their rents higher than the maximum, relying on a high turnover of short-stay claimants.

In Cambridge (university towns provide a good opportunity for exploitative landlords as prevailing rents are pushed up by student demand for accommodation) the maximum is £36 per week. The most successful landlord there, Luigi Desimone, charges £42 per week bed and breakfast. He has recently opened a new house in Tennison Road, where he already runs three houses, and he is understood to have two or three more elsewhere in Cambridge.

Another Cambridge landlord claims to provide breakfast in a guesthouse even though the house has no kitchen and no staff and he himself lives 10 miles away. The Cambridge DHSS will pay no more than £20-£25 per week for a single bedsit, but if 'breakfast' is provided a landlord can get £36 per week indefinitely – and more if he 'turns over' his clientele every four weeks.

This particular area of social welfare is a good example of how caring for those in need can profitably be left to the 'private sector': in this case the 'private sector' consists of landlords profiting from handouts from the State.

Thom Cooper

Pam Isherwood

After the eviction

The rebuilt kitchen at the Green Gate campsite at Greenham Common last Friday, the day after bailiffs smashed up the site, feeding tents, tarpaulins and plastic sheeting into a dustcart crusher. The Tory-controlled Newbury council is adopting a 'low-cost' policy of removing the smaller sites away from the main gate of the USAF base. There have been four evictions of these small camps in the past month, but the peace camp women remain undeterred from their task of preventing US cruise missiles being installed at the base in December.

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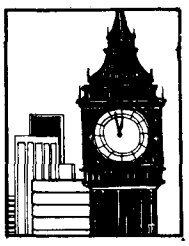

PETER KELLNER, Political Editor

Coming to terms with the 'midway' class

ALMOST THREE months ago, analysing the outcome of the general election, I reported MORI's finding that home ownership was rivalling class as an indicator of voters' allegiances. Among working-class council tenants Labour led the Conservatives by 49 to 24 per cent; among working-class home owners the shares were reversed: Conservative 47 per cent, Labour 26 per cent. (The Alliance won the votes of a quarter of both groups.)

As the number of council tenants is declining, and the number of home-owners is rising, Labour's prospects could scarcely look grimmer. At one level the message is beginning to sink in. In their leadership campaigns Peter Shore and Roy Hattersley have spoken of the need for Labour to project itself as a party that positively encourages home ownership; and, whatever the outcome of the leadership and deputy leadership elections, it is a safe bet that opposition to the sale of council homes will join withdrawal from the EEC in the expanding file marked 'discarded policies'.

But while Labour has started to come to terms with the *fact* of the working-class home-owning Tory voter, little is known about the *nature* of the phenomenon. Is it the ownership of bricks and mortar and a small piece of land as such that turns once-loyal Labour supporters into Conservatives – in which case Labour's response must be concentrated in its housing policy? Or does the experience of owner-occupation change other social attitudes too – in which case Labour has a larger, more complex job on its hands?

It is now possible to begin answering these questions. London Weekend Television is currently broadcasting a series of programmes, *Breadline Britain*, in which data on attitudes to and experience of poverty and the welfare state are based on possibly the most detailed survey commissioned by a newspaper or television programme from any polling organisation. The *NS* has obtained a special analysis of the survey, which was conducted by MORI, comparing three groups: working-class council tenants, working-class home-owners, and middle-class home-owners. Respondents aged 65 and over were excluded from this analysis in order to compare answers from people of working age.*

The most significant general finding from this analysis is that the working-class home owner belongs to a 'midway' class: on most things, of which voting intention is just one, the figures for their attitudes and experiences lie roughly midway between those for working-class council tentans and middle-class home owners. There are exceptions to this rule; but the crucial political point is that Labour cannot hope to regain the support of this growing midway class with be-nice-to-home-owner policies alone. It must come to terms with a far wider and deeper revolution in working-class views and behaviour.

MEMBERS OF the 'midway' class have largely escaped the worst problems of enduring the recession. Just six per cent say that they are poor now 'all the time', compared with 25 per cent of working-class council tenants. Just 10 per cent of the midway class have had to borrow money from friends or relatives in the past year to pay for day-to-day needs (in the middle class it is the same figure), while among working-class council tenants the share rises to 33 per cent.

The differences penetrate every aspect of life. Take unemployment. Fully 44 per cent of working-class council tenants told MORI that unemployment was a major problem in their family. The figure for working-class home-owners was half that number: 22 per cent; and the figure for middle-class home-owners half again: 11 per cent.

However, unemployment also demonstrates another less obvious but equally potent point: that the 'midway' class is in some ways the most worried in Britain. More of them feel the *prospect* of unemployment, or consider the employment prospects for their children, to be a major problem than do the 'classes' on either side. Members of the 'midway' class have started climbing the ladder of individual security and prosperity, but fear falling off it.

The political implications of all this are awkward for Labour, but not completely discouraging. The party may have held a two-to-one lead over the Conservatives among working-class council tenants in June; but overall more people voted against Labour than for it. The party could gain 1.5 million votes just by restoring support among this group to its traditional level of two-thirds of those who vote.

But Labour needs three times that many extra votes to win the next election. If Labour is to have any chance of challenging for government again, it must win the trust and approval of most of the 'midway' class. The table below reveals some harshness in welfare attitudes compared with council tenants – on social security, for example. But there are public sector activities where the priorities of the 'midway' class match Labour's: education, health and job training for the unemployed. And a higher proportion of the 'midway' class than any other – 22 per cent – declined to name *any* area where public spending should be cut.

Shadow ministers have been recently heard discussing among consenting adults 'the Waveney question'. Waveney – Lowestoft to the rest of us – is the kind of seat Labour must win from the Tories to win the next election outright. Two-thirds of Waveney's voters live in home-owning families. When the leadership contest is over, it will be time to start seeking the Waveney answer. □

*MORI conducted its survey between 15 and 24 February 1983 among a total sample of 1,174 people aged 16 and over. 'Working-class' here is defined as people living in households where the main breadwinner does (or, if unemployed, did) manual work; in 'middle-class' households the breadwinner does non-manual – professional, managerial or clerical – work.

Public spending and the 'midway' class

*Q. If the government had to reduce its spending, which **three** of these do you think it should cut its spending on? And if the government intended to increase its spending, which **three** do you think it should increase its spending on?*

	C2DE Council tenants		C2DE home-owners		ABC1 home-owners	
	cut %	*increase* %	*cut* %	*increase* %	*cut* %	*increase* %
Defence	55	4	47	8	49	14
Grants for regional development	34	5	43	5	39	6
Roads	24	11	17	18	20	21
Grants to local authorities	22	4	29	10	28	8
Job training for the unemployed	16	37	10	41	9	43
Social security benefits	14	36	24	13	31	8
Police	13	11	11	20	8	22
Child benefits	13	28	15	13	25	9
Local housing	5	49	16	20	17	17
Education/schools	4	48	1	69	3	69
National health service	1	60	1	66	2	57
None/no opinion	14	1	22	2	13	4

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The monster that won't lie down

Britain is again considering building fast breeder reactors. Duncan Campbell reports that they were known to be dangerous in 1971 – when they were last proposed – and they are still dangerous now

BRITAIN, FRANCE and West Germany are in the process of drawing up an agreement to finance the first of a proposed new network of controversial 'fast' reactors. According to sources in the National Nuclear Corporation, which builds Britain's reactors, 'beginnings of an agreement' have been reached for the construction of a new Commercial Demonstration Fast Reactor (CDFR). Last month, the *Sunday Times* reported that two prospective sites for the first CDFR had been selected by the Central Electricity Generating Board – at Winfrith Heath in Dorset and at Orford Ness in Suffolk. A statement is expected soon from the Department of Energy.

Discussions on the project have taken place directly between Mrs Thatcher and President Mitterrand. It it goes ahead, it will be bringing back to life a more dangerous and unreliable nuclear technology than any presently in commercial use. But, for more than 25 years, nuclear industry chiefs have regarded it as the ultimate cornerstone of the nuclear industry of the future. They have been determined to keep the project alive and to bring it forward again when the time seemed right. Fast reactors, which manufacture plutonium fuel for further reactors in the process of making electricity, have been glibly misrepresented as a potential eternal energy source; critics have dubbed the reactor the nuclear engineer's 'Holy Grail'.

Confidential nuclear industry documents, describing government and industrial plans for commercial fast reactors of the early 1970s, have been passed to the *New Statesman*. They reveal that the government, the UK Atomic Energy Authority, and industrial engineers were then ready, and indeed enthusiastic, to begin work on a huge fast breeder nuclear programme, despite the fact that it would have certainly led to a series of accidents. The documents, including blueprints and contracts for fast reactors, were thrown away by the Gateshead-based Northern Engineering Industries, nuclear manufacturers. They were discovered by local *Newcastle Journal* newspaper reporter Jan Dibblin (whose paper declined to report on them at the time).

In 1971 the CEGB and the UKAEA were proposing that the first British commercial fast reactor should be in operation by 1979, followed by at least another 40 new reactors by the year 2000. According to their own internal calculations, that planned programme would have led to *one accident a year* by 1990 – and to two accidents a year by the end of the century. In fact, the 1971 commercial fast reactor programme never got started. But that decision was taken for economic reasons, not because of safety and reliability considerations.

In 1971, the nuclear industry had little idea how *severe* such accidents might be. They had identified the heat exchangers as particularly unreliable, but believed that it would be difficult for leaks there to start a chain of events leading to lethal damage to the reactor core or its radioactive contents. But they did know that the nuclear physics of a fast reactor meant that there was at least a remote possibility of a small nuclear explosion if its core 'melted down'. They knew too that the core of the first United States fast reactor *had* melted down at Idaho Falls in 1955 after an operator pressed the wrong switches. The second US fast reactor, Enrico Fermi, had also melted down in 1966. That accident came close to requiring the exacuation of Detroit, utterly destroyed the reactor core and was to leave the US fast reactor programme in tatters for 15 years.

A British 'Prototype Fast Reactor' (PFR) was then under construction at Dounreay, on the North coast of Scotland. Now at last in operation, in 1971 the many serious difficulties facing it and other experimental fast reactors were still to emerge. But the huge uncertainties which the nuclear planners were privately prepared to accept, while assuring the public that everything was 'safe', are revealed in the NEI documents. These include the working papers and notes of a confidential 'Commercial Fast Reactor Symposium' held by The Nuclear Power Group Ltd on 29 June 1971 at their then country headquarters in Cheshire, Radbroke Hall, Knutsford.

The Nuclear Power Group has since merged into the National Nuclear Corporation. One of the key 1971 participants, Mr Derek Taylor, is now the Director of Advanced Gas Cooled Reactors with NNC. At the 1971 seminar, he told the engineers and designers at Radbroke Hall that the planned fast reactors would go wrong at least once every 20 years of their 30-year life:

> Based on CEGB statistics, 1½ leaks are likely in the life of the plant *assuming normal integrity* (our emphasis).

So certain were they that things would go wrong that they reckoned it would be necessary for each fast reactor to hold a spare heat exchanger to replace the one or two which would be destroyed by the leakage and mixing its two components, superheated water and liquid sodium metal:

> It would be necessary to carry or obtain a spare unit in case of such an accident . . . carrying of a spare unit is being allowed for in the economic appraisal.

Mr Taylor was asked what would happen in the accidents he expected:

> Q. What sort of leaks might we get and how long to develop to a significant size?
> A. No information is available on this topic.

Earlier, however, he had provided estimates of how finely tuned a nuclear reactor operator's response might have to be to the first indication of an accident. If water mixed with sodium at the rate of just one gramme a second, it was then estimated that there would be a mere 25 seconds before 'further damage' occurred.

At the time he spoke, the CEGB planned to install enough fast breeder reactors to produce between 50,000 and 90,000 Megawatts of electricity by the turn of the century, more than half total planned capacity. This plan anticipated the construction of 40-75 new reactors, at a rate of at least two every year. Thus, according to the CEGB's own statistics, they were accepting the possibility of up to two fast reactor accidents by the end of 1984, and, by 1990, at least one accident every year.

Can a fast breeder reactor explode?

Fast breeder reactors are different from 'thermal' reactors now in use throughout the world. Their nuclear core is highly compressed. A reactor generating hundreds of megawatts of power may have a core little larger than a telephone box. This configuration (and the lack of special materials to slow down the intense neutron radiation inside the core) makes the design of a fast reactor much nearer to that of a nuclear weapon. If a fast breeder reactor's nuclear core melts down in an accident, a nuclear explosion is feasible, although it would still certainly be small in comparison to a nuclear weapon. The possibility of a 'core nuclear explosion' was identified as a potential hazard of fast breeder reactors by US Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff in 1975.

The reactor is 'fast' because of the speed of the neutrons in the nuclear reaction. It is a 'breeder' because spare neutrons from the reactor core are used to convert uranium into plutonium, thus 'breeding' fuel for the reactor to power itself. The plutonium produced is suitable for nuclear weapons. The largest fast breeder in the world, the French Super-Phénix project, will make plutonium for French bombs rather than for everlasting fuel supplies.

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Last week, Mr Taylor candidly described the first Prototype Fast Reactor, on which he worked until 1979, as 'much more hazardous than we anticipated when we set out . . . We've had some horrendous leaks . . . and got away with it!' He accepted that had the 1971 commercial fast reactor programme plans gone ahead, these hazards would have been multiplied many times over. In the Soviet Union, where a similar experimental breeder reactor is installed at Shevchenko, one such 'horrendous' leak in 1976 set reactor buildings and plant on fire. The fire was sufficiently intense to have been detected by orbiting US missile warning satellites, according to the nuclear industry journal *Nuclear Engineering International*.

In 1971, it was expected that the PFR at Dounreay would be operating at full power by the end of 1972, paving the way for the huge programme that was to follow. In fact it did not produce any electricity at all until February 1975. In 1981, the UKAEA's house magazine *Atom* confessed that the reactor had delivered only 10 per cent of the electricity originally expected. The PFR has been a bruising experience for all involved. More than £10 million has been spent on replacing the heat exchangers alone. Mr Taylor explained last week:

> The experience with Dounreay was that we had a fairly disastrous situation . . . a large proportion of the welds in the PFR leaked . . .

That, he said, was 'due to the technology of the day. The heat exchanger manufacturer promised the earth and gave us rubbish'. In his view, however, such accidents were 'not a safety hazard . . . it's just economic'. Internal calculations 'proved', he claimed, that such accidents would not damage the reactor core. But he accepted that all the potential consquences of reactor heat exchanger accidents were poorly known then.

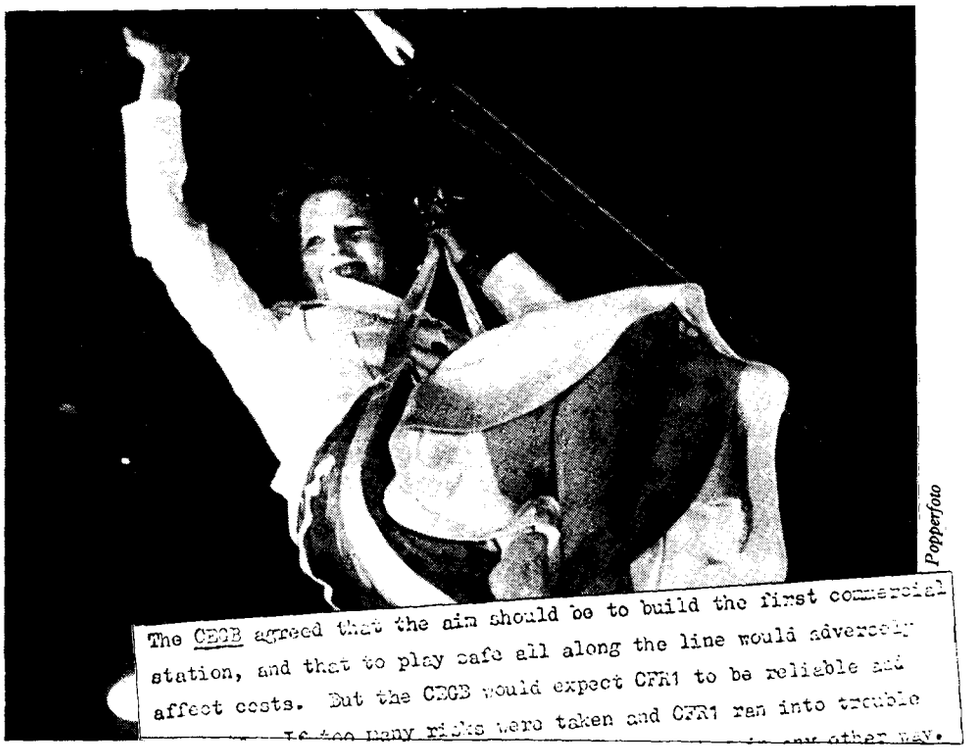
Despite subsequent experience proving far worse than initial design expectations, the CEGB claimed publicly in 1971 that the fast reactor had satisfactorily passed its internal 'Preliminary Safety Assessment', and avowed its determination to press ahead with its programme. The potential consequences of an accident did not appear unduly to have concerned the Board, or the civil servants and industrialists who met in October 1971 on the Fast Reactor Working Party. According to a classified government record of that critical meeting, the CEGB thought that:

> the aim should be to build the first commercial (fast reactor) station, and that to play safe all along the line would adversely affect costs . . .

The British Nuclear Forum, which represented the collective interests of nuclear reactor and component manufacturers, thought that:

> it (was) essential to successful UK exploitation that we should build the first commercial fast reactor station . . . otherwise we might well be overtaken by overseas competitors . . .

The NEI abandoned documents also reveal the CEGB's determination, on economic grounds, to get the criterion governing nuclear reactor siting changed so that it could build reactors in, or close to, built up areas – and not in remote, sparsely populated areas like Dounreay as had previously been required. The CEGB has evidently not changed its view on this point and would prefer that a British fast reactor be sited much closer to its customers than the remote wilds of Dounreay and Caithness.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The CEGB agreed that the aim should be to build the first commercial
station, and that to play safe all along the line would adversely
affect costs. But the CEGB would expect CFR1 to be reliable and

Mrs Thatcher inspects the fast breeder reactor at Dounreay; (below) an extract from the 1971 classified document

By 1971, the CEGB had succeeded in having urban siting accepted for the Advanced Gas-Cooled Reactor (AGR) and had begun construction of AGRs at Hartlepool on Teesside and at Heysham in Lancashire. At both sites, more than 200,000 people live within five miles of the power station. In August 1971, Mr J. O. Grieves of the CEGB wrote of the Board's desire to move fast reactors close in to the cities:

> Fast reactors could not be deployed effectively for electricity production on a continuing programme if they required sites any more remote from population (than Hartlepool or Heysham).

Nor did the board like having to pay for extra safety measures:

> It would be a serious drawback if this 'urban' siting required greatly increasing capital expenditure for safety measures.

The abandoned papers reveal that, if the CEGB got its way over permission for urban sites without new safety measures, it would save £8 billion – £200 million on each reactor.

But the CEGB plan was put on the shelf after 1971 and funds were provided only for the Dounreay prototype. The prospect of collaboration with the French was raised in 1976, but scuppered by controversy in the wake of the Flowers Report on Environmental Pollution. It was left to Mrs Thatcher to make an early trip as Prime Minister to Dounreay in 1979, where she was photographed being winched across the reactor's roof. But no orders or commitment to a commercial fast reactor then followed. Now, however, the spectre is walking again, According to NNC director Derek Taylor, the accident problems now revealed are still present, if diminished:

> If you can't solve the reaction problem, you can't solve sodium cooled fast reactors . . . you're really on to the Achilles heel of the sodium cooled fast reactor. □

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Killing the sacred cow

Has the blind pursuit of 'nationalisation' not only lost Labour votes, but actually impeded industrial democracy? Mervyn Jones believes that it has done both

'ONE THING is clear,' remarked the editor of the *New Statesman* as the staff discussed Labour's electoral defeat, 'one thing is clear – nationalisation is a loser.'

The date was 1951: what Kingsley Martin was querying was not only one of the principal achievements of the Attlee government – it had nationalised coal, the railways, gas, electricity and a few more – but also one of the Labour Party's hallowed doctrines.

In this matter, terminology is important. The phrase used in Clause 4 of the party constitution, which has appeared on membership cards from 1918 to the present day, is 'the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange'. A good adjective, with overtones of the common weal, common interests, even common sense. Somehow, over the years, Labour orators and writers got into the habit of talking about 'public ownership'. The associations are harder and colder – public property, public order. But the word that most people used when they argued about the subject was 'nationalisation'. An ugly word, whose acceptance has much to do with the unpopularity of the 'loser' that it denotes.

Since those days, several other things have become clear. One: that, with a transient and delusive recovery in the 1960s, Labour's popular support has steadily declined. Two: that to ascribe the decline entirely to Tory distortion of Labour's aims, or to the baleful influence of the media, is to evade its underlying causes. Three: that these causes have operated whether Labour's stated policies were, to employ the usual shorthand, moderate or radical (they were distinctly radical in 1974 and 1983). Four: that Labour's most consistent failure has been to prevent the Tory annexation of the concept of freedom. This is the more remarkable when we reflect that Toryism under Thatcher has been visibly more repressive and restrictive than under her predecessors.

Socialism may be, as Gaitskell once said, 'about equality' (though Britain under Labour governments didn't exactly take giant strides toward that goal). But it hasn't been, even in purpose or rhetoric, about fraternity. Most crucially, it has utterly failed to identify itself with liberty, the political ideal to which the mass of the British people attach more value than to any other. The truth is, indeed, worse than that: there's a widespread and deep-rooted conviction that Socialism and liberty are in direct opposition.

We owe this disastrous situation, in considerable degree, to the repugnant picture presented by the Communist countries – or 'Socialist countries', as they insist on calling themselves and are called by their apologists – and we can't do much about that, although it would help if we didn't have Labour MPs whose thinking stopped in the year of Stalingrad. The rest of it is our own fault, and the fundamental blunder has been to present 'public ownership', in the form of the nationalised industries, as the central feature, even the finest flower, of Socialism. If you list the adjectives that most people would apply to the nationalised Boards – bureaucratic, over-centralised, faceless, arrogant – you find that these are also the qualities seen in Soviet institutions. No wonder there's a general impression that living under Socialism would be like being under the sway of British Rail.

IN REALITY there is nothing intrinsically Socialist about nationalisation (the German railways were nationalised by Bismarck) and it shouldn't astonish us that the State-owned corporations, far from conferring liberation on the workers, tend to be authoritarian employers. To consumers and citizens, they are a byword for haughty indifference; although they operate largely in the service sector or in transport, no provision was made for any check on their powers other than toothless 'users' councils'.

Let's add another truth that became apparent too late: since the State-appointed tycoons were not required to have any loyalty to a social philosophy (or indeed any responsibility to Parliament), it's open to a Tory government to appoint tycoons of its own choosing, such as Ian MacGregor, and to use nationalised industries as the spearhead of policies that repeat those of the legendary 'vested interests' of the 1930s.

However, because nationalisation was carried through by Labour governments and generally opposed by the Tories, Labour spokespeople – equally of the Right and the Left, be it noted – have devoted themselves untiringly to the defence of these ugly ducklings: to hailing their achievements in re-equipment and productivity when there were any to hail, concealing their defects, and blaming their more obvious failures on the heritage of the past. And it followed that, if the Socialist cause had been served by the creation of nationalised industries, it would be further advanced by having more of them. Thus, still endeavouring to transform capitalism by salami tactics, the last Labour government created British Aerospace and British Shipbuilding. The innocence of imagining that this made Britain into more of a Socialist society is matched only by Tory fantasies that it was all a Marxist plot.

In the 1980s, unless Neil Kinnock and Roy Hattersley combine to challenge this delusive logic, Labour is doomed to defending the nationalised industries from Tory privatisation with all the aimless zeal of an Ethiopian army defending the Somali desert.

Meanwhile, as Peter Kellner asks (*NS* 22 July), 'What is this thing called democratic Socialism?' Sadly, the honest answer at present is that it's a phrase devised by Labour politicians to counter Tory charges that Socialism means State tyranny.

The most curious aspect of the phase of left-wing victories in Labour politics was that it produced a programme concerned with everything but Socialism – democratic or otherwise. Apart from the (fairly dubious) internal reforms in the party, which absorbed most of the combative energy, the programme offered more nationalisation or re-nationalisation; withdrawal from the EEC; import controls; abolition of the House of Lords; unilateral nuclear disarmament. One may think what one pleases of each of these items – I for one am a passionate advocate of the last-named – but one can't maintain that, if all were realised, they would bring a Socialist society perceptibly nearer. It was easier, no doubt, not to think about that.

I DISCOVERED in 1976 that the Italian Communist Party, which does more thinking over a quick espresso than the Labour Party does in a five-day conference, is completely indifferent to any extension of the public sector. (This, thanks in the first place to Mussolini, is larger than in Britain,

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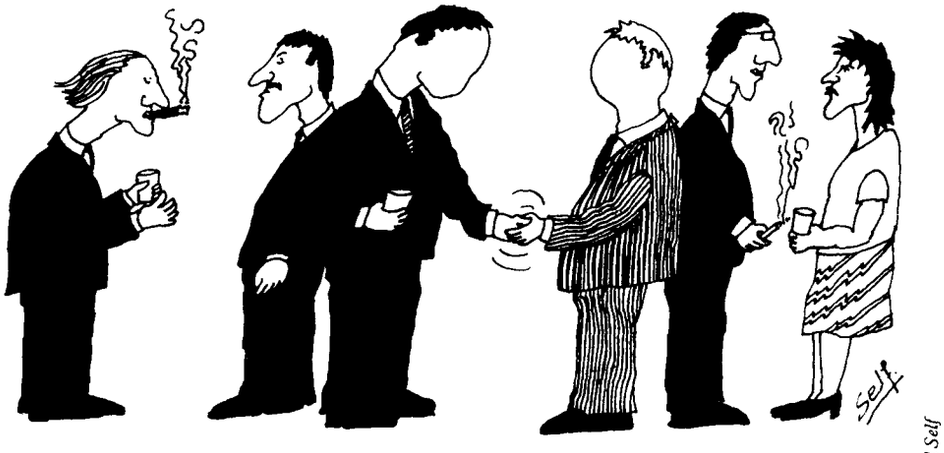

"IT'S FUNNY, I HAD A HUNCH THAT YOU WERE IN MANAGEMENT . . . . "

Will Self

but of course that hasn't made Italy a Socialist country.) What counts, the comrades explained to me, is the weight and power of popular interests – that is, of workers and consumers – in determining both the purpose and the conduct of industry. If we're serious about giving a meaning to 'democratic Socialism', we could usefully start from there.

British industry, whether public or private or on the borderline (incidentally, it would take a panel of High Court judges to decide into which category British Leyland falls) is notable by international standards for its lack of democracy. Some industries are run like feudal baronies over the impotent grumbling of the workers, who alternate between obeying orders and exploding into strikes. Some have managers who practise intelligent consultation – Japanese managers are rather good at it, so it seems, and are popular in Wales with former employees of the National Coal Board. Some are run by quiet compacts between directors and trade union leaders, although the influence of the workers on these compacts is at best indirect. And some forbid union membership, expel 'troublemakers', pay miserable wages and lay off workers whenever sales slacken. Nobody talks much about these, because they are generally small factories, but in total they employ large numbers of workers – mostly women, as you might imagine.

The Grunwick strike in 1977 led to dramatic clashes and newspaper headlines, and even appearance on the picket line by Labour personalities, but it didn't impel a Labour government to do anything for workers of whom those at Grunwick were typical. Such workers still don't have the right to refuse overtime, to get a guaranteed wage over the year, to ensure decent health conditions in the factory, or, for that matter, to join a union. Why, after the Grunwick scandal and the bitter Grunwick defeat, wasn't this made a priority? I suppose because it was more important to set up British Aerospace.

Very few British workers, in the public or the private sector, are in a position to decide on the consequences of an economic contraction, although one of the most evil aspects of unemployment is that it sets workers against workers, survivors against the discarded. They might opt for the closure of a single unit (in Wiltshire, given the choice, rather than Merseyside), or a share of redundancies all round, or no redundancies and a 30-hour week. But that sort of decision is still the prerogative of management.

Even fewer British workers can express an opinion on the distribution of a profit. They might want higher wages, or re-equipment to safeguard the industry's future, or a social improvement such as a crèche or a factory clinic, or a reduction in the price of the product to benefit their neighbours. Insultingly, it's assumed that they couldn't be interested in anything but a wage increase – which they may not get anyway if it contravenes a decision, taken at a level of invisible remoteness, on national economic policy.

In the political world, the loudest noises about industrial democracy have been made by the Liberals, which may be one overlooked reason for their recent progress. That ought to be a reproach to Socialists. For Socialism, as I understand it, is a design for living together, for gaining control over our environment, for using our minds and wills to shape our future, and thus for enlarging the scope of liberty. It's not a structure of authority, nor even of ownership, unless that helps us to advance toward these ends. The Labour Party has a future, and deserves a future, only if this meaning is rediscovered. □

Mervyn Jones is a novelist and a former assistant editor of the New Statesman.

THIS ENGLAND

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□ The Prince of Wales's former valet, Mr Stephen Barry, says in an interview published today that the Royal Family are 'very ordinary' people in their private lives – 'nothing like "Dallas" or "Dynasty".' What really separates the Royal Family from the rest of society, Mr Barry says, is that they have four palaces or private homes, 300 staff and a yacht, three helicopters and three aircraft at their disposal. – *The Times* (R. G. Opie).

Towering talents

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Mobil

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POLICE

Climate of opinion

Camden leader Phil Turner replies to the Met's charges

SIR KENNETH NEWMAN, Metropolitan Police Commissioner, published his report for the year of 1982 in a highly publicised press conference held at Scotland Yard on 29 June 1983. In his introductory remarks, Sir Kenneth commented on 'London's political climate' (see below) in a way that is itself political and requires a political response.

Certainly, we have campaigned for the principle of police accountability and will continue to do so. We have criticised some aspects of police work, including their performance against crime, cited incidents and published these views in broadsheets and give-away newspapers, but we have not done this as part of a 'campaign of dedicated denigration of the police', nor is our criticism 'uneducated and unfair'.

No one could possibly believe that 'the young and alienated section of the community' (whatever that means) could be 'influenced and encouraged to become more antagonistic to the police'. Yet here we stand, condemned in the Commissioner's report as 'extreme activists' who are a 'destabilising influence and a threat to public order'. I regard this as an unjustified smear and a tactic quite unworthy of the incumbent of the highest police office in the country.

Another, and more subtle misrepresentation in this section of the report is the notion that the Commissioner is 'apolitical'. In the purely trivial sense of not being a public partisan of any political party, this is true. In all other respects, it is not. Traditionally, police took care to avoid the political limelight. Sir Robert Mark broke this convention by cultivating the media to campaign for changes he considered desirable. This practice was followed by Anderton in Manchester and Alderson in Devon and Cornwall. The association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), of which Sir Kenneth is a leading member, has made recommendations for legislative change to Royal Commissions, Select Committees and the Home Office. When a Chief Constable or the ACPO becomes involved in trying to steer legislative change in one direction rather than another, he becomes involved in *politics*. I am not saying that it is improper for him to do so. What I am saying is that the intervention of such organisations as ACPO is a political act and should be openly admitted.

At another level, on a day-to-day basis, command decisions on law enforcement and the allocation of resources inevitably involve implicit political judgments. For instance, in another part of his report, the Commissioner targets street crime and burglary as his priorities. These are crimes typically committed by the poorest and most disadvantaged in our society. He could just as easily decide to prioritise crimes against the community committed by businessmen and corporate executives in the field of tax evasion or company fraud. To prioritise the crimes of the poor and neglect the crimes of the rich is a *political* decision.

TO TAKE ANOTHER example, in an area about which this Council is deeply concerned – racially motivated attacks. These are typically carried out by gangs of white youths in one way or another allied to the fascist parties of the ultra-Right. In my view, if the police were to devote the same skills and surveillance equipment that they presently use to monitor and infiltrate the democratic and legal activities of anti-nuclear campaigners, for example, to such gangs of racists, we would soon see a crop of serious charges: conspiracy to commit murder, arson and grievous bodily harm. Here, again, is a clear *political* decision: crimes of violence committed against black people by white youths are not a priority.

It is precisely this highly political autonomy in decision-making of policy matters that has led to the growing demand for the politics of policing to be explicit – with the responsibility for making policy to be made clear to the community that has given such a large sum of money for police services, so that, if the community disagrees with a policing policy, it can show its displeasure at the right place to do so in a democratic society: the ballot box. The present system has already provoked displeasure in the wrong place: in the streets and at the barricades. The real threat to 'public order' is not, as the Commissioner implies, those who campaign for accountability.

Sir Kenneth also commented, at the same press conference, on the use of 'clear-up' rates as a test of police efficiency, and again I must assume that his remarks apply to Police Sub-Committees. Our report of January was critical of the crime figures produced by the police – we made the point that not only was the 'clear-up' rate for London low in comparison with provincial forces, it was unacceptably low in its own right.

The page and a half that the Commissioner devotes to 'clear-up' rates is an unusual mixture of special pleading, double standards and misinformation. First, Sir Kenneth claims that the overall 'clear-up' rate is 'an extremely poor indicator of police efficiency'. Here, he appears to disagree with the view of the Home Office's own Research Unit, whose view is that 'clear-up' rates are 'a robust indicator of police efficiency'.

Second, although Sir Kenneth says that 'clear-up' rates are not by themselves a fair yardstick of police performance, he goes on to draw attention to the 'impressive performance of the police' against murder (75 per cent), kidnapping (65 per cent) and blackmail (53 per cent). Leaving the obvious double standard aside, the illusion of efficiency conveyed by quoting these figures is quite spurious. Anyone whose knowledge of police work extends beyond the elementary knows very well that all three of these categories of crime are relatively simple to solve. In 1981 in London, out of the 65 homicides known to police, 61 of the victims had some form of relationship with the suspected killer. While not denying that the presentation of the forensic and other evidence to the courts is often a difficult and technical matter, in the majority of cases, the essential element in solving the case (i.e. knowing the identity of the killer) is in terms of police work a pretty simple matter. Sir Kenneth knows this very well and he also knows that, in the case of homicide, the performance of the Met compares unfavourably with the rest of the country. For England and Wales as a whole, the overall 'clear-up' rate was 94 per cent and, if the Met's figures are excluded, the figure is 96 per cent.

The majority of kidnapping cases are not committed for ransom, but are merely cases of a divorced parent violating a custody order – again, the identity of the offender is easy to ascertain. In short, these are crimes which have always had high 'clear-up' rates for obvious reasons and to quote those rates as proof of a 'professional and dedicated police response' is highly misleading.

Sir Kenneth goes on to say that 'clear-up' rates are 'unreliable' as a performance measure because they are affected by whether or not arrested people ask for other crimes to be 'taken into consideration'. He thus implies that the Met's figures cannot be compared with those of other police forces. The way police forces in this country classify

Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Kenneth Newman's annual report 1982

London's political climate

The political climate in some parts of London at present is inimical to progress in policing. The main debate centres on the issue of police accountability. As an apolitical Commissioner I must, and do, acknowledge the right of any person or group to advance proposals for change in the constitutional arrangements for the control and administration of the police. When the debate is restricted to the objective merits of the proposals for change, there can of course be no objection. Unfortunately, some proponents of change go farther. They seek to boost their case by a campaign of dedicated denigration of the police. The campaign includes uneducated and unfair criticism of police performance against crime, zealous dredging for any incident that can be [illegible] and tendentious accounts of complaints against [illegible] broadsheets and give-away

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crimes is laid down in the Home Office's *Instructions for the Preparation of Statistics Relating to Crime*, 1971, p.5. If the Met departs from those instructions in such a way as to make comparison of 'clear-up' rates between them and the other forces impossible, then we should be told why. If it does not, then comparison is quite fair and the comparison shows us that the Met are between one-half and one-third as successful in clearing up serious crime as police forces outside London.

The simple fact is that the Met does not do very well against crime. In the past, it has demanded, and we have paid for, more equipment, more vehicles, more computers, more weaponry, higher pay and more personnel – all in the name of increasing efficiency in the fight against crime. This has not worked. In our view, the Met does not lack in any of these items. What it does lack is the confidence and cooperation of the public, especially those who are the poorest and most deprived. This alienation between the police and the public is reflected in the Met's poor performance against crime – the single most important factor in the solution of crime being information provided freely by the public, which always knows its community (and its criminals) better than the police.

An elected Police Authority is needed in London, to put the community (through its representatives) back in overall charge of the police. Then they will be able to do the job we expect them to do: be the organised expression of the citizens' desire for peace and tranquillity for their persons and property. At the moment, they are not doing this job and it is apparent from the Commissioner's report that he neither recognises this simple fact nor knows its basic cause. □

Phil Turner is leader of Camden Council and chair of its Police Sub-Committee, which met this week to discuss a report on which this article is based.

ABORTION

Priests and politics

Mary Holland on next week's referendum in Ireland

'THOSE WHO walk out are questioning the authority of the priest in the community,' the Rev Niall McDermott warned his congregation at Sunday mass in Sligo two weeks ago.

Nobody did walk out, but then, according to the report in the *Irish Times* the next day, Fr McDermott's sermon on next week's abortion referendum was a relatively mild affair. Mild, that is, compared to some of his recent addresses to his parishioners – in which he has described, in graphic physical detail, the horrors of abortion. During one of these sermons, several of Fr McDermott's congregation did walk out, as other Irish Catholics (of astonishing courage) have been doing in rural parishes up and down the country when their priests have waxed gruesomely eloquent to ensure that the vote goes the right way next Wednesday.

As loyal readers with an interest in Irish affairs already know, we are currently in the final throes of a long campaign to have a total ban on abortion, already illegal here, written into the Irish constitution. Voting will take place, on 7 September, on a text which reads: 'The state acknowledges the right to life of the unborn and, with due regard to the equal right to life of the mother, guarantees in its laws to respect, and as far as practicable by its laws to vindicate, that right.' If passed, the point of this will be to ensure that no liberalising of Ireland's abortion laws can take place without another referendum.

The text is, by any standards, a shoddy piece of legal draftsmanship, and is, I am told, even more confusing in the Irish text, which will take precedence if (as many people fear) the amendment becomes an issue of contention in the courts. Over the past few months, doctors, lawyers, priests

MYTH

"..local democracy, like any other, requires its participants to exercise self-restraint and responsibility. Local government threw these aside years ago."

"Now only the Government can rescue the captive ratepayer from the tender, "democratic" mercies of the likes of Ken Livingstone and his friends."

DAILY EXPRESS

FACT

During the period 1978/79 to 1983/84 current expenditure on goods and services administered directly by **Central Government** increased by 101%. Over the **same period GLC** gross revenue expenditure increased by 88%.

In the light of the Government's proposals to abolish the Greater London Council, we would like the chance to tell Trades Union members more of the FACTS.

A GLC Exhibition with video and information packs to take away will be at Blackpool for the Trades Union Congress.

Come to the GLC meeting at the Imperial Hotel (Ballroom) at Blackpool. 6pm, Wednesday September 7th 1983.

Speakers include Ken Livingstone and his friends.

GLC
Working for London

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and journalists have been debating the exact meaning of these words in terms reminiscent of mediaeval arguments on theology. The Irish public, which is, by inclination, rather reticent on sexual matters, has been bombarded with the minutiae of fertilisation, implantation, ensoulment, zygotes, ectopic pregnancies, fallopian tubes, the treatment of hypertension in pregnant women, the survival chances of foetuses delivered by Caesarian section at 26 weeks – to mention some of the simpler and more accessible points in the debate. The confusion among the public is now almost total.

I must once again admit that there is no way that this article can pretend to be distanced, objective or balanced. I've been involved in the campaign against the amendment since its first tentative beginnings some 18 months ago. At that time, it was quite difficult to get even the better known liberal figures to come out as sponsors to help us launch the Anti-Amendment Campaign. There were always good reasons for their hesitation, the most potent being the fear of being pilloried as baby murderers, a fear which turned out to be all too real and cost two of our most committed supporters – Michael D. Higgins, the chairman of the Irish Labour Party, and Jim Kemmy – their parliamentary seats.

Since then, one has seen the situation develop to a stage where to be against the amendment has become the only respectable liberal place to be. That won't be enough to win the referendum, but it has meant that this has been one campaign where, even if we don't win, the experience has been a heartening one.

I HAVE ALREADY written in the *New Statesman* on the signal courage of Irish Protestant leaders, who, despite intense pressure, have maintained a principled opposition to the amendment. This, in turn, has helped others to come out against the whole business. Senior members of deeply conservative professions – the law and medicine – have taken their first tentative steps into the murky waters of political controversy and, as the hate mail has poured into their consulting rooms, have become radicalised (on this issue, at least) before one's astonished eyes.

While there have been tensions and strains on the Left, which has been the backbone of the campaign from the start, these have somehow been overcome. This has been one broad front which, against a background of deeply held ideological and religious differences, has managed to avoid the fate which Brendan Behan once described as inevitable for any Irish campaign in which 'the first item on the agenda is the split'.

Trades and professions have been riven by the issue and not just those associated with obstetrics or family law. Only last week, we had a Farmers Against the Amendment group launched. The launching ended in such a row that 11 leading members of the powerful Irish Farmers Association have been suspended from their positions in the organisation.

There have been other distractions to confuse us, by no means all of them Irish. Malcolm Muggeridge, scheduled to speak at the pro-life rally, has pulled out and embarrassed his hosts by informing the Irish media that he believes that the amendment would make it *easier* to introduce abortion in Ireland. Various American politicians have arrived to tell us that the eyes of the world – or, at least, of the US anti-abortion lobby – are on Ireland.

While farmers fight and doctors differ, the politicians have melted almost completely from public view. Garret FitzGerald, who was the first political leader to agree to the demands of small pressure groups for the referendum, is scheduled to address the nation on television before polling day. When he came to power, he tried to find a wording somewhat less reactionary in its implications than the one now facing us. He was defeated by a Catholic revolt in his own party and the text of the amendment on which the electorate will vote is that of Charles Haughey's Fianna Fail party. Dr FitzGerald has already said that he believes this amendment could kill women, because of the threat it represents to current medical practice where a pregnant woman's life may be at risk, and to methods of contraception like the IUD and the 'morning after' pill, which are widely held to be abortifacients. If he makes these points on television, urging his own Fine Gael supporters to vote 'No', his intervention could make an important difference to the result.

IF THE POLITICIANS have been conspicuously absent from the debate, the Church has more than filled the vacuum – with the initiative in the hands of the laity and local priests and the hierarchy some way behind. This is particularly true of northern bishops, who have to think of the effects on the Church's relations with Protestants when the whole thing is over.

As a body, the hierarchy has waited a very long time indeed to give any definitive guidance to its flock on the issue. Their statement, when it came, inevitably called for a strong 'Yes' vote from Catholics, but it also recognised, to many observers' surprise, 'the right of every person to vote according to their consciences'. The bishops, like the politicians, know that the drawn-out wrangling on the issue has resulted in recent opinion polls showing that a majority of Irish people think that the referendum should not be held at all. When it comes to the poll, a majority will almost certainly vote 'Yes', at least in part because they fear that a defeat of the amendment would be interpreted as 'giving the green light to the abortionists in our midst'. But they disapprove of the whole divisive business and, in particular, of the way in which the political leaders have handled it. Nor do they like the increasingly shrill involvement of the Church in the political arena – notably the tone of the sermons, statements and events which have now become commonplace.

Here are just a very few examples. From the auxiliary bishop of Dublin: 'God, not the majority of the electorate decides what is moral and God is a majority of one.' From a priest in Cork: 'I want you to say your rosary all day if possible in front of the Blessed Sacrament' to ensure that the amendment is passed. Last week, at a vigil of atonement for the sins of abortion, prayers were said for women who had 'committed the crime' of abortion and for enemies of the 'pro-life' campaign. In the same week that the bishops said that people should vote according to their consciences, a priest on a current affairs programme on Irish television told his audience that that was all right for some people, but, for the 98 per cent of Catholics in the state, it meant having an 'informed conscience' – and that meant doing what the bishops told them.

The unknown factor in the last few days of the campaign is what effect this relentless pressure from the pulpits is going to have, particularly on the 25 per cent of the voters who, at the last opinion poll, were still undecided – rather than the 44 per cent who have said that they will vote 'Yes' and the 31 per cent who have declared themselves as 'Nos'.

Last weekend, in the wilder reaches of Co Clare, a politician with a shrewd feel for his own rural constituency told me he thought that the dire warnings in the churches might have a quite different effect from that desired. For a start, it would mean that people in country parishes, conscious of the eyes of their neighbours and the priest, would have to go out and vote. But, he continued, there has always been a strong resentment in Ireland to clerical interference in politics, and this is heightened, this time, by a widespread feeling that the whole pro-amendment campaign is an attempt to drag Ireland back to the 1950s, when the priest ruled unchallenged in his village. When people get to the secrecy of the polling both, he thought, a lot of them might vote 'No'.

I'm in no state to judge. In the office of the Anti-Amendment Campaign, the mood veers between absurd elation and near despair. It is all very reminiscent of the British general election, when every Labour candidate I knew told me that the polls might be prophesying catastrophe, but that they were confident about winning in their own constituencies. Very few of them did. The outcome of this referendum, the size of the respective votes, is as important for Ireland and our future relations with the North as the general election was for Britain. In the circumstances, I can hardly ask you to say a prayer or light a candle for us, but spare a thought for us next Wednesday. □

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DIARY

Hugh Stephenson

It has been a long hot summer for those of us who support the heat badly. For years, my solution to the summer holiday and heat problem has been to take a sailing holiday in south-west County Cork. In a normal year there you can guarantee that the sun, when it shines, won't burn; that, if it's hot at midday, you'll be wanting a sweater by the evening; and that things will be kept looking fresh by at least *some* rain every day or so. But not this year. The sun beat down remorselessly day after day. The Emerald Isle began to turn brown and the wells to run dry. The *Cork Examiner* proudly announced that it was hotter than Malaga and so it was, with the extra disadvantage that the sea remained, as usual, still too cold for the average adult to swim in voluntarily with pleasure. 1968 and 1976 were also bad, hot summers in south-west Cork – but nothing like 1983. I was told that 1940 or 1941 was a shocker as well, but that was before my time as an Irish tourist. If I thought that some new weather pattern was becoming established, we should have to be looking for somewhere further north for our sailing holidays. But the probability is that things will be back to normal in 1984, so we may give County Cork one more go.

○

One reason for returning from holiday was that I was required to appear in court as a defendant. It's a measure of the sheltered life I've led that I have never appeared in court before, as a defendant or anything else. The case was simple enough. Someone was claiming that the *New Statesman* owed him a modest sum of money and we were disputing it. The outcome was also satisfactory. The plaintiff didn't turn up and the case was dismissed. The point of the story is that it all took place in a small claims court and, on the basis of that limited experience, they are clearly excellent institutions. People should make more use of them. Unlike the rest of the legal system, the proceedings are informal, quick and sensible. And the greatest attraction is that lawyers aren't involved, so it's also cheap. If you want to make a claim of up to £5,000, all you have to do is pay an absolute maximum of £35 to take out a summons from any small claims court. If you want to resist a claim, you do so yourself. Come to think of it, now that I've got the hang of the thing, there are a couple of people who owe me money – including a shameless senior trade union official (who shall for the time being remain nameless) who denies that he took and lost a bet about the general election. But I suppose that that is a gambling debt and therefore unenforceable.

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The project of a new national daily newspaper sympathetic to the aims and interests of the labour and trade union movement is still just on the rails, as the sisters and brothers prepare to gather once again at Blackpool. Lord McCarthy's 'feasibility' report was accepted by a substantial majority of the TUC General Council last week, but I get the impression that the size of the majority is not a reflection of the level of genuine enthusiasm in the upper echelons of the movement. No one doubts the case for a new paper. The imbalance in the existing national press is blatant. There is now not a single daily newspaper whose heart is left of centre (the *Morning Star*, with its circulation of 30,000, excepted). Even given that television is infinitely more powerful as a medium for creating public opinion than newspapers, this situation cannot be either right or healthy. For newspapers (even small circulation magazines, for that matter) still have a strong capacity to influence the 'agenda' of overall news and current affairs. And the imbalance is getting worse not better, as news editors, editors and proprietors settle down to operating for another five years in the anti-socialist, union-bashing McCarthyite (Joe) framework of Thatcherism. But people were nevertheless surprised (and a bit embarrassed) that Lord McCarthy's report came out so positively. Len Murray clearly believes passionately in the idea; but getting the £6.7 million that McCarthy says will be required (I think in the end it would be rather more) out of Messrs Basnett and Duffy and the rest of the trade union movement, as risk money handed over without strings to a trust, is not going to be the easiest sell in the world. Some help from outside the movement will be needed. But the chalice would be poisoned from the outset if, to make up the money, the proposed trust turned for help to those on the wilder shores of capitalism. Mr Robert Maxwell, no doubt, would be only too willing to lend a helping hand and cheque book.

○

ROGER WODDIS

His Royal Helpless

According to Stephen Barry, the Prince of Wales's former valet, interviewed in Women's Own, *the Prince 'doesn't really know how to do anything for himself.'*

The first thing one learns from one's Nanny
(I'm sure that you found this as well)
Was facing the difficult problem
Of constantly pressing a bell.
But once the technique has been mastered,
Why, everything falls into place –
Though sometimes I wish, when they dress me,
I knew how to tie up a lace.

With so many duties to shoulder,
A chap who is heir to the throne
Should not eat his crispies unaided
Or go to the loo on his own.
One rings when one's trousers need pressing,
One rings when one needs a clean shirt.
(I once told my man not to bother –
I think he was terribly hurt).

In matters requiring attention
One does have a dutiful wife,
But treating one's spouse like a servant
Means spoiling our beautiful life.
I often gaze into the mirror
And dream, when they're brushing my hair,
Of being an ordinary worker
Who's free of the burdens I bear.

○

For an example of the uniform bias of the British press, you don't have to look further than Arthur Scargill's trip to Moscow. Now, while I feel for the simultaneous translator who was suddenly faced with the problem of rendering the rather feeble pun about 'President Ray-gun' into Russian, what was really surprising about the substance of what the man said? American foreign and military policy (with Thatcher's full support) *is* now in an unstable and terrifying condition. If even Secretary of State Schultz is in despair at the dangerous naïveté of what the President and Judge William Clark, his tyro National Security Adviser, are up to in Central America, Africa and the Middle East, for a left-wing British trade union leader and professional self-publicist to express the same views is hardly front page news – even over a Bank Holiday weekend at the close of the silly season. But (again with the *Morning Star* excepted) the rest of the press presented the thing as virtually an indictable act of high treason. It's not that news editors share the political views and value systems that dominate the papers for which they work. For the most part they don't. It's just that Fleet Street hunts as a pack. A story tends not to be a story until someone has printed it somewhere. Then everyone wants it on their front page. The so-called quality papers behave just the same way as the pops. For a new trade union paper to work, it would need a new kind of news editor.

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FOREIGN NEWS: PAKISTAN

Sinners and Sind

Tariq Ali on what the unrest in Sind province means to General Zia's six-year-old military regime

WHEN SIR CHARLES NAPIER'S expeditionary force, with its customary brutality, occupied Sind in the 1830s, its commander is said to have reported it with a Latin pun: *peccavi* (I have sinned/Sind). General Zia's officers, currently engaged in containing the mass movement in that strategically important province (it shares a long border with India), are not yet in a position to despatch the modern Punjabi equivalent to their backers in the Pentagon. These are still early days.

The significance of the present unrest in Sind is twofold. It is not simply a struggle for democratic rights, but, primarily, an expression of Sindhi nationalism. The eruption is a direct result of the cruel military occupation that followed the *coup* of July 1977.

Bhutto was a Sindhi politician. Ever since his execution in 1979, Sind has been restless. The army acknowledged the seriousness of the situation by stationing six of its 20 divisions there. As there are hardly any Sindhi officers in the army – and since the Sind Regiment (sic) is composed almost exclusively of non-Sindhis – it is hardly surprising that the imposition was viewed as a violation of Sindhi national rights.

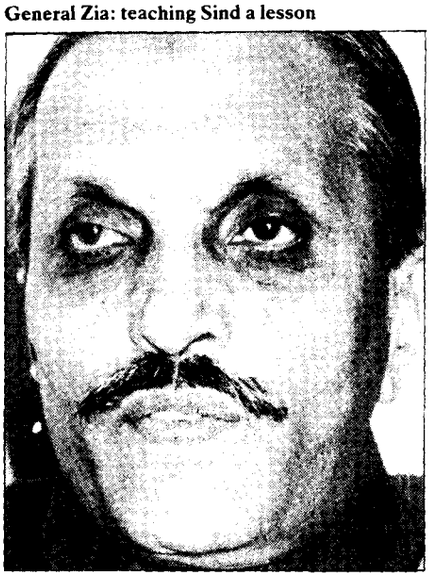
The Pakistan Army and its high command are experienced in dealing with submerged nationalities inside Pakistan. The attempt to crush the Bengalis led to the break-up of Pakistan in 1971. Only two years later, the army occupied Baluchistan (another Pakistani province bordering on Iran and Afghanistan) and conducted a civil war for five years. It won, but the guerrillas of the Baluchistan People's Liberation Front (BPLF) fled to neighbouring Afghanistan. Today there is hardly any important Baluch political leader who does not believe in Baluch independence.

Now the army seems to have decided to teach Sind a lesson. Over the past fortnight, nearly 200 people in the province have been killed, several hundred wounded and thousands imprisoned under martial law regulations. The only support has come from Baluchistan, where a general strike paralysed Quetta and several smaller towns in a display of inter-provincial solidarity. The Baluch nationalists have accused the military regime of 'internationalising' the conflict by permitting the United States to construct a naval base near the port of Gwadur. According to Ataullah Mengal, the former Chief Minister of Baluchistan, this base is linked to the strategy of setting up local relays for the American Rapid Deployment Force. Mengal, now in exile in London, told me last week that the tiny islet of Mehdi-Ye-Koh, off Gwadur, has become a giant radar base and that 'no civilian officials, not even the most senior ones, are allowed to enter this area. Within the restricted zone there is another prohibited area, where only the top Pakistani army men are permitted. The entire zone is manned by Americans.' This new development could end the uneasy truce between the Army and Baluch nationalists and lead to renewed conflict in the region.

The explosion of Sindhi nationalism was predicted by those of us who had been monitoring military rule in Pakistan. There were numerous incidents in the rural interior of Sind of women being raped, their menfolk being publicly flogged or hanged for resisting and even people totally aloof from politics being subjected to indignities by arrogant and overbearing Punjabi military officers. It is difficult for most Sindhis to travel freely unless they have obtained a military pass. Small wonder, then, that slogans bearing the inscription of *Sindhu Desh* (independent Sind) have appeared on walls throughout the province and that demonstrators have made four railway stations inoperative and killed a number of policemen.

EVER SINCE the establishment of a military dictatorship, the army and its network of competing intelligence agencies have sought to avoid, at all costs, public manifestations of discontent. Zia displayed Machiavellian skills in manipulating politicians and parties during his first five years in office. Warned of impending unrest, he tried on this occasion, too, to pre-empt the movement by promising elections to provincial and national assemblies in 1985. This time, no one was taken in. The Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD), an alliance of nine political parties spanning the entire political spectrum, called for civil disobedience on 14 August (Pakistan's Independence Day). The response in Sind shook both the dictatorship and the MRD – both of whom in the past, have underestimated the effects of the national oppression that underlies the rickety structures of the State in Pakistan.

General Zia: teaching Sind a lesson



Camera Press

What makes the Sindhi response a powerful shot across Zia's bows is that the people have demonstrated their readiness to die. Even though the movement is restricted to Sind and Baluchistan, it represents a powerful stimulus to the common people of the Punjab and the North-West Frontier Province. This regime may not fall tomorrow, but Zia's months are now numbered. His staunchest backers in the West – Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher – are, no doubt, already searching for a replacement model. His own senior officers have sounded the tocsin by beginning a clandestine dialogue with right-wing politicians with the aim of achieving a lasting political settlement.

Zia attempted a cynical use of religion to cement the army's hold over the state. The result was barbarities on every level. Women were deprived of rights and subjected to an institutionalised brutality. Last December, a pro-régime cleric led his congregation after Friday prayers to stone a new-born baby to death: the child was illegitimate and, thus, a 'product of sin'. A few weeks ago, a religious court sentenced a young blind woman to be flogged for the 'crime' of adultery. (The man, of course, was set free.)

Pakistan's generals, however, have failed to make religion the opium of the people. Ironically, what they've done instead is to make *heroin* a minority religion. There were 50 registered addicts in Karachi (the largest city) in 1972. Today, there are 50,000. A number of generals have become overnight billionaires, while the victims of heroin are dying at an alarming rate. Add to this the treatment of trade unionists, journalists and national minorities and it becomes clear that drastic remedies are needed.

Any régime that follows Zia will be under mass pressure to push through drastic reforms on every front. A demand already emanating from the minority provinces of Sind and Baluchistan is for the Pakistan army to be dismantled from top to bottom, as the necessary prerequisite for a voluntary federation. A thoroughgoing land reform is vital for social and economic advance. If the politicians, currently waiting in the wings, succeed in forcing the army's officer corps voluntarily to surrender its powers of patronage and privilege, the choice facing them will be stark, but simple. Either they reconstruct the State on totally new foundations, or else it will cease to exist. □

Tariq Ali's new book Can Pakistan Survive? *is published by Penguin at £2.95.*

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SOUTH AFRICA

Anyone for 'tripartheid'?

John Kane-Berman on the liberals' dilemma over 'reform'

Johannesburg

DECLINING white support for his constitutional 'reform' plans – for a tricameral parliament with white, Asian and 'coloured' representatives – could well be one of the reasons why South African Prime Minister P. W. Botha has finally decided to take the plunge, and, on 2 November, put them to the test in a referendum. The latest opinion polls show that support has dropped, in a few months, from 65 to 61 per cent of white voters.

In particular, opposition among liberal whites is rising. This is largely the result of an energetic campaign by the official opposition, the Progressive Federal Party (PFP). Polls show that the anti-constitution vote among PFP supporters has risen from 28 to 44 per cent.

Given the defection of much Afrikaner support to the reactionary New Conservative party of Dr Andries Treurnicht, Botha's dependence on English-speaking voters has increased. But, if the polls are to be believed, it looks as if English-speaking support for the new constitution may have peaked. Hence the announcement of the referendum date – despite Botha's April announcement that the referendum would not be held until the present drought had been broken, which it hasn't.

The PFP has been fighting its own uphill battle against a strong tendency among its traditional supporters to take the line that the new constitution, whatever its defects, is at least a 'step in the right direction'.

The opposition leader, Dr Frederik Van Zyl Slabbert, argues that the exclusion of blacks from the new tricameral parliament is not a temporary omission, which can be rectified later, but a pre-condition for the new constitution to work. The government itself has made it clear that blacks can never be allowed in. If they were, they would upset the arithmetic of the new system, which leaves whites in an absolute majority over their Asian and 'coloured' allies in what should surely be called 'tripartheid' rule.

Slabbert feared that a bland referendum question, of the 'do-you-believe-in-reform?' variety, would manoeuvre his party into voting for the new constitution. At least that hasn't happened. The question will be: 'Are you in favour of the implementation of the new constitution as approved by parliament?' Already, Slabbert has called for a 'No' vote. The white rightist parties are doing the same, for exactly opposite reasons.

The threat from the Right has presented Botha with one of his most powerful arguments to woo left-of-centre whites: support me even if you don't like me because, if you don't support me, you'll get somebody worse (i.e. Treurnicht). Botha has been making especially crafty use of this argument in his efforts to woo big business (most of which in South Africa is still in English-speaking hands).

Though several major business organisations have criticised the exclusion of blacks, they nevertheless go along with the 'step-in-the-right-direction' argument. After decades of political deadlock in South Africa, it is perhaps understandable that business, like many left-of-centre whites, should take the view that some change – *any* change – is better than none at all. This comforting stance ignores the fact that not one black leader in South Africa shares it. Chief Gatsha Buthelezi and his 750,000-member Inkatha movement began mobilising against the new constitution even before the bill was introduced in parliament, when they formed the South African Black Alliance. This year, two more opposition groupings – the National Forum Committee and the United Democratic Front (UDF) – have been formed.

All three organisations have considerable support among the growing black middle class and urban intelligentsia. The forum has particular support among 'black consciousness' adherents. The UDF brings in various local community organisations, former supporters of the banned African National Congress (ANC) and some trade unions. Inkatha adds other old ANC people and a mass base among black peasants and the black working class. Moreover, major trade union organisations – notably the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU), the country's largest non-racial but black-dominated grouping – having rebuffed overtures to join the UDF, have still condemned the government's plans. They began to mobilise even before the UDF was launched. FOSATU and other unions with black, as well as Asian and 'coloured' members, are well aware of the divisiveness of a constitutional plan that will enfranchise some, but not all, of their members.

Although the UDF does not appear to have any mass base among blacks, it is likely to play an important role in mobilising Asian and 'coloured' people to vote 'No' in the referenda that leaders in those communities say have been promised them after the white referendum.

Whites willing to vote 'Yes' appear to be overlooking the extent of all this black opposition. Those sections of white opinion that are urging the government to introduce a 'fourth chamber' for urban blacks are ignoring, not only repeated statements by half a dozen senior ministers that there will never be any such thing, but also statements by Inkatha (for one) that blacks would not join such a fourth chamber anyway – on the grounds that a constitution with racially segregated legislatures is built on a 'racist foundation'.

'Yes'-inclined whites are also, apparently, ignoring research at Rand Afrikaans University which shows that blacks are more strongly opposed to tripartheid rule than to white rule, and statements by Inkatha that adding Asians and 'coloured' people to the 'white domination' team will make blacks even more determined to resist 'separate development'. □

NIGERIA

Electoral skirmishes

Suzanne Cronje examines the controversial elections

HALFWAY THROUGH Nigeria's turbulent elections last month, Nigerian playwright Wole Soyinka arrived in London predicting a military takeover, or civil war, or both. Skirmishes, he said, had already erupted all over the country without being reported.

Soyinka is a socialist and has a history of dramatic intervention in his country's politics. He was one of the few Yorubas who argued the case of the Ibo secessionists and, during the Biafran civil war, he spent some months in jail. A former supporter of the veteran opposition leader, Chief Awolowo, he has now joined the smaller left-wing Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) which is not too pleased with his pronouncements via the British media. But what he said in London, others have said in Nigeria: the elections were blatantly rigged; there has been organised political violence; and there is widespread resentment at the cynical use of power by a small, corrupt élite.

Soyinka puts the blame for these iniquities squarely on President Shagari's National

new left review

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A POLITICS FOR THE FUTURE

The British Left after the election

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Party of Nigeria (NPN), which made sweeping electoral gains. He maintains that Nigerian farmers, factory workers and market women are 'united *en masse*' against the NPN. But it is doubtful whether the opponents of the establishment are sufficiently organised to behave as Soyinka predicts. Moreover, the NPN is not the only guilty party. Awolowo's Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) stands accused of similar corrupt practices in the western states. The same is true of Dr Azikiwe's eastern-based Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP). These three differ little from each other, according to another leading Nigerian intellectual, the left-wing novelist Chinua Achebe who is on the PRP executive – 'If you come from the outside and you hear three voices, you think that's democracy. But they are just three different autocracies operating in the same area.' Shagari's recent appeal for a national consensus is, Achebe adds, 'the consensus of the millionaire and the contractor'.

The NPN may not be alone in trying to fix the results, but it has the advantage of federal power which gives it control, not only of security, but also of prolonged electoral arrangements themselves. In 1979, the presidential vote came as the last ballot. This time, it was the first of the five – which did more for the NPN than any amount of rigging. For Shagari's advisers calculated that there was not much doubt that his 'good guy' image would win him a second term and that the other results would follow automatically. They were right. For example, before the senate vote on 20 August, an advertisement in the Nigerian press addressed itself to the Idomas, one of the smaller ethnic groups: 'The President has been re-elected for the next four years. The NPN therefore is the ruling party for another term . . . Therefore, it is in our interest to vote in NPN senators who will assist us from within the power base . . .'

The NPN had a net gain of six state governorships, giving it 13 out of 19. As the ballot for the state legislatures comes last, it is still unclear whether these governors will be supported by NPN majorities in their state assemblies.

It is also doubtful whether the NPN will get the hoped-for two thirds majority in the federal senate, and its strength in the house of representatives could depend on the results from Oyo and Ondo States, where further voting had to be postponed when violence broke out after it was announced that the NPN had captured these traditional Yoruba strongholds from the UPN. At least 70 people died in the two states before a curfew was enforced.

There was less outrage in the UPN when the NPN won the governorship of Bendel State. This ethnically mixed area was already divided over the embarrassing reputation for corruption which the Bendel government had acquired under the UPN Governor, Ambrose Alli. But Bendel also exemplifies the NPN cynicism which Soyinka so fiercely attacks: the successful NPN candidate, Samuel Ogbemudia, was governor of the state when it was still called the Mid-West and was sacked in 1975 (and his property confiscated the following year) after allegations of graft and investigations into his administration.

WAS BENDEL State fairly won by the NPN? An official commented with equanimity that 'in this state there has to be a balance of rigging'. But rigging in the NPN interest was far from universal – at least, it was not universally efficient. Kwara State was lost by the NPN to the UPN. The NPN's Kwara branch had suffered from particularly serious internal rifts. The voting figures are too distorted to allow any valid conclusions, but it is interesting that in Kano State the turnout of voters in the first two rounds was less than half the national average, which, itself, was below 50 per cent. Kano, by far the largest of the states, has remained a PRP stronghold, despite the decision of the first PRP governor, Abubakar Rimi, to join the NPP.

Nigeria is by no means a one-party state, despite the NPN's massive gains. A third of the electorate still lives in states run by non-NPN governors. The NPN itself is not monolithic and embraces a wide range of local and ethnic pressure groups. Its policy of zoning, the rotation of the leadership between different areas, will now be even more important. The four zones are the north (which produced Shagari), the Yoruba west, the Ibo east and the minorities. Until the former Biafran leader, Odumegwu Ojukwu, returned from exile and joined the NPN, it was often assumed that it would be the Yorubas' turn next. When Ojukwu undertook to 'deliver' the Ibo states to the NPN, he began to be tipped as Shagari's successor. But his ambition suffered a setback when he failed to win a senatorial seat in his home state, Anambra. Although the NPP governor of Anambra did lose to the NPN, Vice President Alex Ekwueme, who also comes from this state, tends to take credit for the change. Ekwueme and Ojukwu do not get on very well, and they differ on such important issues as relations with South Africa – a crucial point, since Ekwueme is seen as a likely president in 1987.

Meanwhile, the results of this year's elections are still in dispute, with the losers asking the courts to nullify them because of electoral irregularities. If either side were to refuse to accept a final verdict, particularly in the Yoruba states, the sort of military take-over that Soyinka is predicting might be encouraged. As a precaution, Shagari has tried to ward off military discontent by giving the army sophisticated weapons. Only days before the first poll, Lagos finalised a £100million order for 18 Jaguar fighters by paying the deposit in London. Fortunately, oil revenues have picked up in recent months.

But satisfying the army's thirst for modern hardware may not be enough. Earlier this year, the students called for another Murtala Mohammed-style reformist military government; they were demonstrating in several states against public corruption. Shagari's proposed answer to this sort of discontent is a more cohesive administration and a radical foreign policy – which will, at least, emphasise Nigeria's leading position in Africa. □

WEST GERMANY

Big Brother

Tony Paterson on a new and controversial identity card

Bonn

IF EVERYTHING runs according to the plan of Conservative Federal Interior Minister Friedrich Zimmermann, every West German over 16 will next year become the proud owner of the world's first computer-readable and counterfeit-proof citizens' identity card.

The ID, shaped like an outsized credit card, is currently being churned out in blank form at a rate of 50,000 a day, in preparation for nationwide introduction in November of Orwell's year. Citizens will then be legally bound to pay DM2.50 to own one.

The card looks innocent enough. It bears the owner's photograph, data and place of birth, signature and nationality. But it also carries a ten-figure number that enables it to be fed into police computers and checked instantaneously against criminal records.

The system, according to Frankfurt police president Karl-Heinz Gemer, 'cannot be equalled in its philosophy and perfection by any other system in the world'. For others, like former Hamburg Justice Senator Ulrich Klug, the new ID casts the shadow of Big Brother over West Germany, and will provide 'guaranteed entry into the police surveillance state'.

Opponents of the new ID cover a surprisingly broad spectrum – ranging from the radical Greens to members of Chancellor Helmut Kohl's conservative Christian Democratic Party. All of them fear that the new ID will allow the police unprecedented powers of surveillance.

For, coupled with the introduction of the new ID is a new 'personal passport law', that enables the information on the card to be linked to police data banks for purposes of 'border control, criminal surveillance, and prevention of security risks'. Effectively, opponents point out, the new ID will allow police to check the identity of any individual at any time or any place, simply by pressing the button on planned portable card-reading machines directly linked to computers.

Once the initial link is made, there is nothing to prevent police, under the pretext of hunting for terrorists, from linking information on the ID card computer to the series of computer banks held by regional police that contain personal information on thousands of people who have, at one time or another, brushed with the law. These include everyone from known criminals to anti-nuclear demonstrators or squatters. Opponents also fear that the ID will be linked to the country's register of names and addresses – a series of computer banks held by local authorities. □

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BRETECHER

DYKES

you're not going to tell me you've never been to bed with a woman?
yes or no?
well... I... er...
and?
er... um... well... actually... yes...
well... um... I mean... I know it's ridiculous but I prefer men
oh well there you are you're completely frigid
well not specially... I mean no... not really
but how could you possibly know my poor darling?
it's only with a woman you can have an orgasm don't you see? it takes a woman to understand the body of another woman
oh I don't know
take it from me some men can...
UUUURGHH... stop it
listen I was with a man for two years... well... never again... NE-VER A-GAIN you can't imagine how revolting he was... just thinking about it makes me want to throw up
then one day I met this DIVINE woman... but suppose that was it... you'd been living with a revolting woman and met a divine man?
I can't tell you
UUUURGHHH
let's face it you hate the fact that you're a woman, you deny what your own body's telling you and in essence you deny the whole feminine experience... don't you see?
but sometimes my man can
stop going on about your man. they're all sick, they're all warped, they're all complete shits
yes... well... women just don't turn me on that's all
that's racism
BRETECHER

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LETTERS

Why contractors come a cropper

Leslie Moody, London SE3

Quentin McDermott's report (*NS* 26 August) on Pritchard's troubles at Wandsworth and Taskmasters' troubles at Merton makes fascinating reading for anybody who knows the industry. It may be asked why contractors, who, for years, have had things all their own way in office cleaning, have come a cropper on gardening and street cleaning contracts.

To understand the answer it is necessary to remember that we are talking about contracts that are unusually labour intensive. Despite claims by the industry that it has introduced new technology and work rationalisation, the reality is that costs can only be cut significantly by reducing pay, or by reducing numbers, or, more commonly, by both. In office cleaning, the contractors have it made. As the damning 1981 ACAS report on the industry revealed, their potential labour force is predominantly female, is pitiably unorganised and, because of domestic pressures, limited in its choice of work. Hence the women can be forced to accept hourly rates that, as the report pointed out, are often below even the lowest wages council rates and to accept work schedules that border on the risible.

Gardening and street cleaning contracts, however, are horses of a very different colour. Here, the labour force is predominantly, if not exclusively, male, is union organised and, as the recent strikes have shown, is less easily bullied into accepting inferior pay and unrealistic work schedules. No wonder poor Pritchard's are steering an erratic course between the Scylla of a demanding client and the Charybdis of nil profits. Long may their boat founder. Wandsworth's Tory councillors deserve our thanks (though I doubt that they will welcome them) for being instrumental in exposing the hollowness of the industry's claims.

Flaming injustice

Martin Wainwright, London W4

Hugo Williams does an injustice to *The Flame Trees of Thika* in his television review (*NS* 26 August). It is not set in Kenya in the 1940s and it does not deal with the Happy Valley characters and their antics in colonial days. It describes the life of settlers immediately before the First World War and does so with an admirable understanding of all points of view – from Mr Roos the Afrikaner to Andrew, the Masai cook who accused Elspeth Huxley's mother of refusing to take him back to Europe because he was black.

Next time Mr Williams calls in at your office, tell him to cross Farringdon Road to the *Guardian* and I'll lend him my copy. Alternatively, Penguin have just published a reprint at their usual reasonable price.

Jews, Zionists and anti-semites

Marion Woolfson, London NW1

Without exception, every member of my family of the appropriate age and sex volunteered for service with the British Armed Forces during the First and Second World Wars. Some of them were killed and others maimed and I, therefore, find it hard to credit that any sane person would have said, as Roald Dahl has done, that 'we saw almost none of them [the Jews] in the armed forces' (*NS* 26 August). In fact, a very large proportion of the Jewish community of this country fought in its defence.

As a writer who has carried out considerable research into the subject of Nazism and as a Jew whose German relatives were murdered by the Nazis, I was appalled by Roald Dahl's contention that the Jews were 'always submissive' when faced with the gas chambers. The Nazis convinced the Jews that they were being sent to work camps and, even when they were stripped naked prior to extermination, the Jews believed they were merely about to be 'disinfected'. When they eventually became aware of what was really happening, the Jews were far too weakened by deprivation and starvation to offer effective resistance to well fed and heavily armed Nazi thugs. Nevertheless, many Jews fought courageously against the Nazis in spite of overwhelming odds.

It goes without saying that it is untrue to suggest that the entire 'Jewish race' (has Roald Dahl ever asked himself what racial characteristics North African and Scandinavian Jews have in common?) supports Israel. As I pointed out in an article in the *New Statesman* after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, there is much opposition inside Israel to the policies of the country's rulers.

It has long been the practice among certain Zionists to attempt to suppress adverse criticism of Israel by labelling it 'anti-Semitic'. The Palestinians, on the other hand, are at pains to make a clear distinction between being anti-Zionist and anti-Jewish. It does not do their cause any good when those who ostensibly support it resort to the kind of crudely offensive anti-Jewish ravings that belong to an era which most of us believed had ended with the defeat of Nazism.

Beating and sado-masochism

Tom Scott, Education Secretary, STOPP

'Ellen Barker' (Letters 12 August) suggests that the European Court of Human Rights will not necessarily rule a school beating to be degrading and thus a breach of Article 3 of the Human Rights Convention.

In fact, the case of Mrs X v. UK greatly strengthened STOPP's conviction that the Court will declare child beating to be degrading. The case was dealt with by the Commission on the basis of a 'friendly settlement'. This was not, as 'Ellen Barker' claims, 'because the litigant was not confident of the Article 3 issue', but because the family feared that, if the case went to the European Court, they would lose their anonymity and be liable to be subjected to obscene letters and telephone calls from flagellomaniacs. This enabled the government to avoid a certain defeat in the Court, for the Commission's unanimous provisional finding was that the caning inflicted on Mrs X's daughter was degrading.

The government was forced to pay £1,200 damages to the mother of the caned girl and to circulate all local authorities, warning 'that the use of corporal punishment may in certain circumstances amount to treatment contrary to Article 3 of the Convention' (letter dated 5 March 1982 from the Department of Education and Science to all Chief Education Officers).

Many cases involving children who have been beaten are at present sub judice at Strasbourg. And Stephen Sedley, QC, one of the country's leading authorities on educational law, has recently given a legal Opinion in which he stated: 'It remains on the cards that Britain . . . will eventually be found guilty of breach of Article 3 when a case of a child who has actually been subjected to corporal punishment reaches the Court.'

'Ellen Barker' also claims that nearly all contemporary French parents flog their children with a miniature 'cat'. This, of course, is simply not true. As Ian Gibson pointed out in *The English Vice* (a book which, for some strange reason, 'Ellen Barker' feels should have been written by a doctor): 'Flagellomania, while almost totally absent in France, Spain and Italy (is) widespread in Britain, especially in England.'

Even if 'Ellen Barker' refuses to admit that flogging in schools can lead to the development of sado-masochistic tendencies, she can hardly deny that some teachers are sadists who get sexual pleasure from beating children. In 'Britain's Violent Teachers', a dossier of cases reported to STOPP in 1982, we give details of incidents at two separate schools where children were beaten on their bare buttocks. And, in 1981, a headmaster was given a suspended prison sentence for indecently assaulting girl pupils aged five, eight and nine. The prosecuting solicitor said that the headmaster had 'made up feeble excuses for smacking the children on their bare buttocks. He told the police it was becoming "compulsive" '. Unfortunately, most of the teachers who find it 'compulsive' to beat children are never found out.

Finally, I think your readers are entitled to know a little more about 'Ellen Barker'. This person writes letters to newspapers all over the country, usually describing in salacious detail an eight-lash caning she allegedly received as a 15-year-old. The following brief extract will give readers some idea of the tone: 'I had to take off my skirt and bend over with only thin summer pants between my seat and some three feet of exceedingly supple malacca.'

'Ellen Barker' has also written at least one article for a journal called *Kane*, which is a pornographic magazine devoted to the subject of flagellation in schools and elsewhere. She nearly always purports to write from 109 Balls Pond Road, Islington. This address does not exist in the electoral roll, but, if it did, it (like other odd numbers in Balls Pond Road) would be in Hackney, not Islington. Perhaps your readers will draw their own conclusions about the worth of the pro-beating diatribes from this sadly obsessed person.

Glossy blue stained fences

John Gilbert, Glasgow

Please keep up the architectural criticisms in the *New Statesman*. It's like a voice of sanity in the world.

I recently went around the Glasgow School of Architecture's Diploma Show. Nearly all the students had 'post classical' displays, with plenty of mock columns and entablatures. It was all so conservative. The students seem to pick the style up like a disease. We still get students working for us who think that in order to make something called 'Architecture' you have to use glass blocks, square mesh panels, blue stained fences and doors with portholes. No matter how many tenants groups you involve them with they still end up trying to make a design which will get into the 'glossies'. The 'glossies' have become an architectural award system.

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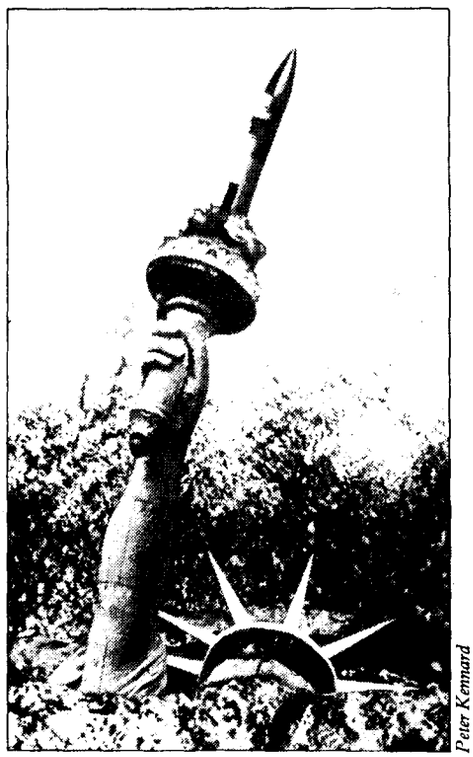
Godfrey Hodgson

The great contest



Peter Kennard

The Making of the Second Cold War
FRED HALLIDAY *NLB* £18.50 *Verso* £4.95

THIS IS an ambitious and extremely important book. As I shall subsequently explain, I have a number of relatively minor quibbles with it, and two major differences with the author's thesis. But his thesis is so bold, and is worked out so carefully and in such detail, that it is worth stating at some length before attempting a critical analysis.

We are now once again in a period of Cold War, Halliday says. (As it happens, the phrase, the 'Second Cold War', is not original with him.) He uses the words 'cold war' not, as they are used for example by E. P. Thompson or by André Fontaine, to mean the whole period of confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union since 1945, but to refer to periods when war is more likely than at other times. The years between 1946 and 1953 were one such period. The present time, beginning with the shift of the Carter Administration's foreign policy to the Right in its last two years, and emphatically since Ronald Reagan's inauguration in 1981, is another such time of heightened danger. Indeed this second Cold War is far more dangerous than the earlier one because the Great Contest between America and the Soviet Union is now entangled with the accelerating nuclear arms race.

Halliday analyses at some length five 'major causes' of the second Cold War. One is the decline of American military power. (He is careful not to call it Soviet superiority; that, he says, is a myth.) He considers that much recent comment on the weakness of the American economy is exaggerated. What is important, because of its psychological and political consequences, is a perception of relative American decline in military terms, and specifically the loss of assured nuclear superiority.

The second cause of increased tensions between the superpowers is the new wave of revolution in the Third World. The first turning point Halliday pinpoints was the Angola episode of 1974. Only after Henry Kissinger sent in the CIA and unleashed the South Africans to support Jonas Savimbi and his Unita guerrillas did the Russians and the Cubans send military aid to the MPLA. At about the same time the North Vietnamese began the offensive that led to the collapse of America's allies in South-East Asia. After the fall of Saigon in 1975 there was a lull for a couple of years. In 1978 the Soviet Union backed the Somali attack on Ethiopia in the Ogaden. Then came the Afghan coup, followed by Soviet invasion, in 1979; and the full-blooded revolution – *not* followed by Soviet intervention – in Iran.

Third, and in part as a consequence of these events, there was a swing to the Right in the United States. Halliday calls it an 'offensive', which suggests rather too much collusion and premeditation. But no one can disagree that the centre of gravity both of American foreign policy, and of public opinion, has shifted many points to the Right since 1976.

The fourth cause of the new Cold War, Halliday says, was what he calls the 'involution' of the 'post-revolutionary states'. It is not quite clear whether by the rather affected word 'involution' he means merely 'involvement' or 'implication', its primary meaning both in the OED and in Webster, or 'the retrograde change which occurs in the body . . . in old age', its fourth meaning in the Shorter Oxford. That would seem to be rather an accurate description of what has happened to socialism in the Soviet Union, but Halliday does not appear to accept this. In any case, his point seems to be simply that the way things have worked out in the Soviet Union and its allies has contributed something to the onset of a new Cold War, a point with which I would not wish to quarrel.

Lastly, he argues, the new Cold War has been caused in part by the aggravation of the 'contradictions' (another imprecise word, but an old Marxist warhorse) of international capitalism. This too is a portmanteau concept; his analysis rolls up together everything from trade competition, the Reagan Administration's concern with European participation in the Soviet gas pipeline and the decline of the dollar to the Falklands war.

Now this is a brave attempt to interpret the certainly dangerous trend of international relations in a multicausal model. The question is whether Halliday has apportioned responsibility correctly. At the beginning of his chapter on the 'post-revolutionary states', he goes out of his way to deny that the United States and its allies were solely responsible for the coming of the second Cold War.

'The role of the Soviet Union, and of the post-revolutionary states more generally', he says, 'is to be differentiated from that of the capitalist world. It is nevertheless considerable.' Nor is this a mere genuflexion to the theoretical possibility that the Soviet Union and its allies are not immaculate. He proceeds to be quite critical both of the Soviet leadership and of the state of Soviet society. Yet, having done his best to strike an even-handed posture, Halliday comes down firmly on one side. He is quite specific about what he calls 'the unequal character' of the Great Contest. It is 'the USA and its allies . . . who bear the primary responsibility for launching the Second Cold War because of what was seen in Washington as an erosion of the superiority, military and political, that the West had previously had.'

This is a bold thesis. It will be seen by moderates, Atlanticists, Social Democrats and the like as shocking Left-wing nonsense, if not as Soviet propaganda. What is more interesting is that it will be seen by many on the Left as unduly pro-Soviet, because many on the Left and in the peace movement now equate the United States and the Soviet Union as two indistinguishably selfish and dangerous carnivores. Halliday does not take that position. He specifically insists that, while the Soviet Union must bear some of the responsibility for the Second Cold War, the main responsibility must lie with the United States.

THERE ARE a number of minor criticisms of the way Halliday has set forth his thesis. It is a well-organised book: too well-organised. There is a theory to cover every event; and every event is made to fit into a theory. This is the Waterloo of the staff college lecture, not the chaotic event Julien Sorel stumbled upon in *The Red and the Black*. The real elements of confusion, rivalry, ignorance and hazard in international affairs are smoothed out by the power of theory. Another minor criticism is the book's language. It is stuffed full of imposing scholastic neologisms. 'Involution' is the most confusing of these, 'bellicist' (for 'bellicose') one of the more irritating. *Stricto sensu* for

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'in the strict sense' is a third which I was able to translate, but rather wondered why I needed to be made to.

I have, however, two more serious criticisms. It is inherent in the idea of the Great Contest (a phrase invented, I believe, by Isaac Deutscher) that each superpower sees the other as ceaselessly pursuing illegitimate ends. It is true enough, too, that under both Henry Kissinger and Zbig Brzezinski, not to mention Ronald Reagan, American foreign policy has often pursued goals, both in bilateral dealings with the Soviet Union and in dealings with third parties, that were inevitably bound to provoke a hostile response. It is even possible to argue plausibly, as Halliday does, that there were on balance more of these occasions than of those when the Soviet Union, by specific actions, provoked fear or anger from the United States.

But the real underlying reason for a shift in American attitudes, and in attitudes in the rest of the 'West', towards the Soviet Union in the late 1970s, was a widespread perception that the Soviet Union's long-term goals were indeed world revolution and military supremacy. That was, for example, the nub of the crucial debate over the 'Team B' estimate of Soviet intentions in late 1976. The new estimate was that Soviet intentions were far more hostile to the West, and to the *status quo*, than had been assumed in the *détente* period. That estimate was arrived at by ideologically committed conservatives such as Richard Pipes and Richard Perle. But it was also derived from actual Soviet behaviour. The Soviet navy did steadily grow. The Soviet missiles did multiply at a steady rhythm. The Soviet Union did continue to support, with arms and through Cuban expeditionary forces, somewhat arbitrarily chosen Third World revolutionary movements.

I am half-persuaded by Halliday's general thesis. But he seems at bottom to assume that it is normal and justified for the Soviet Union to work for revolution in the Third World, abnormal and illegitimate for the United States to oppose revolution. Why? Because revolution is 'historically inevitable'? Is that really the lesson of the last 40 years?

The other criticism I have to make must be framed in a more wistful key. Like many other analysts, Halliday finds it easier to understand what has gone wrong than to propose a course of action to take us out of the murderous labyrinth of the new Cold War. One clue he presents us with is the idea that Cold War between nuclear superpowers, accompanied by hot war in many parts of the Third World, might be assuaged by what he might call the eirenic influence of a Socialist Western Europe. It would be nice to think that such a consummation was about to take place. It would be even nicer to imagine that it would soothe savage breasts in Washington and Moscow, let alone Santiago and Pnom Penh. But unfortunately we have to solve the lethal riddles of the real world, not suppose that invoking the word 'socialism' as a talisman will save us from the monster's den. □

ESSAYS
Jon Cook

Six to one

Under the Sign of Saturn
SUSAN SONTAG *Writers & Readers* £6.95 & £2.95

Under the Sign of Saturn, first published in the States three years ago, brings together a selection of Susan Sontag's essays from the last decade. Some of these have already appeared in this country in other places: the piece on Canetti in a recent edition of *Granta*; the essay on Benjamin, which gives its title to the collection, as an introduction to a translation of his writings, *One Way Street*. But, although none of the pieces in *Under the Sign of Saturn* is published for the first time, their collection into one volume allows a more sustained reflection on the rewards and difficulties of Sontag's work and its particular engagement with the forces at work in contemporary western culture.

The rewards are great and will be familiar to Sontag's existing readership. They are the effects of the characteristic voice established by Sontag's style. The salient feature of this voice is its unremitting seriousness. Whatever Sontag writes about she makes it matter. This, no doubt, will make her seem a strange, even alien, presence to a reader accustomed to that relaxed and witty style of critical commentary which is so much the norm in this country – a style whose purpose seems to be to make nothing matter very much at all in a world whose model of literary judgment is based upon the dandified appreciation of the cut of a fellow's clothes. *Under the Sign of Saturn* is a gallery of Sontag's heroes – Benjamin, Canetti, Artaud, Syberberg, Barthes and Goodman – whose absorption in a life work makes them other-worldly, exiled rather than at ease in their particular cultures and therefore far removed from that comfortable English tone.

Sontag's choice of subjects is another indication of her high seriousness, but that seriousness does not produce a cold monotone. She writes affectionately about acquaintances recently dead in her obituaries of Barthes and Goodman, and with a controlled contempt about modish dabblings with fascism evidenced in the cult of Leni Riefenstahl or the pornographic subcultures which replay the SS as an erotic attraction. Indeed, it's in this essay, 'Fascinating Fascism', that some of Sontag's most telling judgments on contemporary taste emerge. Again seriousness and its corrupt discarding are to the point here, as Sontag analyses the process which finds beauty in Riefenstahl's films:

> Backing up the solemn choosy formalist appreciations lies a larger reserve of appreciation, the sensibility of camp, which is unfettered by the scruples of high seriousness: and the modern sensibility relies on continuing trade-offs between the formalist approach and camp taste.

Regular readers of Sontag will find this a characteristic sentence: dialectically astute, combative, judgmental, the style of a strong personality. But they will also notice a change from her previous critical positions, notably in the greater scepticism towards the value of camp style, the subject of an earlier and more affirmative piece, 'Notes on Camp', collected in *Against Interpretation*.

The earlier pieces from the Sixties, like 'Notes on Camp', provoked by their capacity to provide a powerful rationale for certain cultural fashions. Sontag challenged conventional assessments of what was deep, what superficial, by exposing the tastes of an Anglo-American cultural élite to the work of a European avant-garde. Against a background which identified aesthetic excellence with cultural conservatism, Sontag's project insisted that the best modern art had its own kind of subversive energy, a potential source of cultural revolution. Her own writing, however loosely, seemed to promise a connection between an aesthetic and political radicalism.

The pieces collected in *Under the Sign of Saturn* give less evidence of this connection. This may mark a gain in critical power in so far as Sontag is less likely to run the risk, evident in some of her earlier writing, of being the excited advertiser of the latest thing in New York. But there's a different kind of risk in these more recent essays whereby Sontag seems to be renewing cultural conservatism rather than breaking from it. This risk can be identified in various ways. During a perceptive analysis of the stylistic eclecticism of Syberberg's *Hitler: A Film from Germany*, Sontag remarks, in passing, that the two things absent from the film are a 'Marxist analysis' or 'a shred of feminist awareness'. It's not just that the substance of the judgment is questionable given Syberberg's acknowledged indebtedness to Brecht. It's the manner in which the comment is made, the failure to develop it into anything like a sustained critical argument. As the essay is a lengthy and impassioned praise of Syberberg's film, it can then appear to his credit that his film contains neither 'Marxist analysis' nor 'feminist awareness'. The very crudity of the formulation suggests that Sontag's comment is little more than a gesture designed to elicit an approving nod from fashionable conservatives.

'Feminist awareness' takes on an uneasy resonance in relation to this collection. The naive equation would have it that because Sontag is a woman, a writer and, hazily, a radical, she must therefore be concerned with feminism. The blurb to *Under the Sign of Saturn* encourages this view: 'Whether Sontag is treating the arts, politics, film or feminism, she is always essential reading.' No doubt Sontag is right to resist this kind of identification, but feminism is not just another instance of outdated radical chic, and Sontag's detachment from it is strange

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indeed. If anything, *Under the Sign of Saturn* is a *counter*-feminist work if only by formal implication. It is a species of hymn to the father, a *memento mori* of what Sontag wants to persuade us are the great self-involved 20th-century minds whose achievements supply the model for her own work and sensibility. Six men are portrayed whose intense work stands out against what Sontag perceives as a general tendency to cultural regression. Leni Riefenstahl is the one woman to be given sustained attention and the corrupting effects of her example condemned.

But the very act of selection here, that one woman against those six men, is damagingly provincial, despite the sustained claim to a cosmopolitan and sometimes snobbish awareness that Sontag's essays make. Her images of strength remain resolutely masculine and therefore, sadly, withdrawn from important contemporary sources of power. At this juncture, Sontag's seriousness can seem not a virtue but an evasion, a facade of style for the writer to hide behind. □

AID
Nigel Cross

In the balance

A Bridge of People
BEN WHITAKER *Heinemann* £4.95

When our economy recovers, Mrs Thatcher told Third World leaders in 1981, the British will resume their traditional role as generous supporters of developing nations. Until then charity begins at home. The economy must be a long way from recovery: the UK aid programme was cut by another 2 per cent last month. There are, of course, those who argue that overseas aid breeds dependence, waste and bureaucracy, to which one can only reply that it needn't and it shouldn't and in the case of Oxfam it doesn't.

Oxfam is 40 years old and the richest charity in Britain; last year it had an income of £16.2 million. To mark the event Ben Whitaker has written an inspiring, if at times arbitrary account of Oxfam's work and history. He traces it from its beginnings in 1942 as an Oxford Committee for the wartime relief of blockaded Greeks to its emergence in the 1970s as one of the world's most respected development organisations and one of the ten largest shopkeeping chains in Britain.

Throughout the book Whitaker keeps up a barrage of grim statistics which help to explain the existence of Oxfam – 'Help Stamp Out Oxfam' was one of the charity's more winning slogans. He uses the Oxfam story to discuss the *raison d'être* of development charities and justifies their work by pointing out that since 1979 the government has cut more from the aid budget than their combined income. The very fact that this voluntary effort is just a drop in the ocean compared with potential government funds has led to an intense debate in the charity world.

Many aid workers believe that charitable funds would have a much greater impact if spent at home instead of overseas. Behind the apparent paradox is the sad fact that the British public are insular and ill-informed and consequently the official aid programme has no electoral support. A home-based education/propaganda programme, so the theory (endorsed by Whitaker) runs, would change British attitudes and reap dividends. However, much offical aid is tied to the purchase of British goods and has tended to favour middle-income developing countries such as Mexico and Turkey. And of course a sizeable chunk of the aid budget is spent on easing the uncomfortable lives of Gibraltarians and Falkland Islanders. Unless, as Frank Judd has suggested, the Overseas Development Ministry can go independent like the Arts Council and the BBC, there is little evidence that official aid, even under a Labour government, would be worth supporting.

The biggest obstacle for the would-be propagandists is that only one in ten donors wishes to support educational campaigns, nine out of ten want their money spent on overseas projects. They may know best. Charities such as Oxfam are a great deal more flexible than government or inter-government agencies. They can respond more quickly and efficiently to a developing nation's needs and they can *learn* from their mistakes. Above all, Oxfam and its fellow agencies have acquired a unique field experience which is infinitely more valuable than the putative insights of development 'experts' – economists, agronomists, social scientists and journalists.

Another major issue is the character of Oxfam's advertising and fund-raising. People respond to facts rather than issues. Oxfam's greatest fund-raising success was the disaster relief operation in Kampuchea which raised £6m for the victims of Pol Pot – thanks to John Pilger's unashamedly sensational reporting for ITV and the ever-generous audience of BBC TV's *Blue Peter*. Disaster appeals always succeed – but less frantic development work attracts less interest. Oxfam's most important work consists of modest support for small-scale development projects: a loan to set up a fishing co-operative in India; a grant for a literacy campaign in Ecuador; funds for a tree protection scheme in the Himalayas. To raise money for this development work Oxfam ads have featured wide-eyed, swollen-bellied children and their emaciated mothers. Critics have accused them of pornography. But such a shock horror approach to fund-raising clearly works even if it fails to educate the donor in the issues of development.

Although Oxfam's donors are rich compared with its clients, Oxfam collectors often find that they can raise more in a poor neighbourhood than in a wealthy suburb. Among Ben Whitaker's many shocking statistics is the fact that our annual voluntary contribution to all charitable work amounts to a miserable 85p per head (just by buying Whitaker's book – the royalties go to Oxfam – you can achieve half this sum). British industry is three times meaner than US industry, 'between 1970 and 1980 donations to charities from all British companies declined by 64 per cent in real terms: falling as a percentage of pre-tax profits, from 0.70 per cent to a mere 0.23 per cent.'

Oxfam is not a Victorian charity doling out conscience money to dusky beggars. As the title of Ben Whitaker's book makes clear, it is 'a bridge of people' who share experience and resources. It is not just trendy semantics for Oxfam to describe its clients as 'partners'. Whitaker shows that we are not only 'guilty of a sin of omission (in failing to give more)', but also of a 'structural sin of commission (by taking too much)'. What is needed, as always, is justice not charity. □

EUROPE
Paul Binding

Blinkers

The Impossible Europeans
LUIGI BARZINI *Weidenfeld* £12.50

Luigi Barzini is a socio-political journalist with an admirable anti-Fascist past and a wide reputation in the post-war world as an international ambassador of the pen. That neither of these qualifications is a guarantee of continuing soundness of moral judgment his latest book abundantly demonstrates. *The Impossible Europeans* purports to be an examination of the major countries of the EEC: does enough harmony exist both within and between them to enable a United Europe to arise as a real third Superpower? Not, one must hastily add, to play an intermediary or a challenging role. For Signor Barzini's view of the present two Superpowers is nothing if not clear: 'One is a noble experiment famously based on the ideas of . . . the *siècle des lumières*. The other is notoriously a primitive and brutal adaptation to semi-Asiatic conditions of oversimplified Marxism-Leninism.' It must therefore be Europe's duty to relieve the United States of some of the terrible strain it suffers in preserving democracy in the world, 'which . . . in the twentieth century means nuclear weapons and space defences'. Nevertheless, individually, European nations continue to show a strange reluctance to face up to this destiny; Luigi Barzini considers them one by one, allotting to each a sobriquet, 'The Quarrelsome French', 'The Careful Dutch' etc.

The chapter on his own countrymen – 'The Flexible Italians' – provides the key to Signor Barzini's thinking. It is here that he finally abandons his stance of time- and travel-seasoned *mondain*, lover of good wine and pretty women, to indulge in righteous hysteria. This is provoked by the Italian

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Communists whom he both puts on a par with their Fascist enemies and sees as an infiltrating barbarian tribe – not proper Italians at all, and inspired by a perverse love of havoc and a wish to get money out of Moscow. Their large numbers might seem difficult to explain away, but apparently their newspaper *Unità* 'terrifies' many Italians into joining the party through mysterious threats and deceptions. Fortunately the turning of Italy into a Soviet satellite was prevented in the Forties largely through the exertions of the Church which had so 'lately' shown itself as the 'fortress defending Western values' 'against Fascist and Nazi dictatorships'.

After this truly amazing statement nothing that Signor Barzini has to say should surprise, but in fact it does – through the audacity of the many clichés delivered as personal *aperçus*. Barzini has, for example, found the British stoical, inscrutable, good in a crisis, and patient in the face of all their ridiculous strikes. Similarly he has come to the conclusion that the Germans are a changeable people, but thorough-going in each change. In the Falklands War the British 'found their real nature again', a matter for rejoicing, it seems; about Germany he is less sanguine. It is the country that will decide our future and it is 'particularly dangerous when unhappy', as he thinks it is now.

Barzini's Europe lacks working classes, ecology, disinterested concern with the Third World, art, sport, philosophy. Its socialists are, at the very best, blinkered cranks. No religion apart from a worldly form of Catholicism seems worth taking seriously – think of the Dutch Protestants who have deduced pacifism from the New Testament, when surely what they really want is an excuse for the comfortable life we know all Dutch people desire. The blurb is pleased to speak of Barzini as a 'major writer' who has made a 'profound examination': he is, in fact, a myopic and perniciously prejudiced one, and his book is profound only in its stupidity. □

Among this week's contributors:

GODFREY HODGSON's books include *In Our Time*, a study of the US from World War II to Nixon, and *All Things to All Men*, an examination of the American presidency.

JON COOK lectures at the School of English and American Studies, University of East Anglia; he is co-author of *Romanticism and Ideology*.

PAUL BINDING has recently returned from teaching and writing in Spain and will shortly be going to Germany to work on a book about the post-war generation.

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Loyalties

Brothers
BERNICE RUBENS *Hamish Hamilton* £8.95
Beginning Again
RUTH ADLER *Hodder* £8.95
Light
EVA FIGES *Hamish Hamilton* £6.95

It is 1835. Reuben and Benjamin, both aged ten, uncle and nephew though they have been brought up as brothers, are in peril of forcible 25-year conscription into the Russian army. Jakob Bindel, their father and grandfather, tells them how they must try to live: 'There is no cause on earth worth dying for, no God . . . no country . . . no principle . . . Only in the name of love is Death worthy. And friendship.' They must survive, he says. And, as generation of brothers succeeds generation, the Bindels survive, or try to survive. Five hundred pages' worth of accidents of history (though also of contrivances of plot) visit upon them a pogrom in Odessa in 1871, a Welsh mining disaster in 1908, incarceration at Buchenwald – where a Bindel brother is driven to assist in murder so that he himself can survive – death in Auschwitz, and torture at the hands of Soviet 'psychiatrists' in the 1970s. Yet each generation manages to pass on to the next the original life-preserving injunction of Jakob Bindel. And Bindel brothers continue to survive.

Bernice Rubens's **Brothers**, a different sort of novel from any she has written before, is a brave, almost defiant statement of the philosophy that protecting oneself and those one loves is more virtuous than defending principles or beliefs; the latter she sees as a kind of baptism. Yet survival is surely only one aspect of the Jewish inheritance, which has also seen its martyrs, idealists and fighters. And in any case, isn't Jakob Bindel's injunction too vague to offer real guidance? What *are* 'love' and 'friendship', and what counts, or doesn't count, as defending them? Historical accident ensures that no Bindel brother is conscripted into the Allied armies to fight against Hitler: would *that* risk of death have been justified in the name of 'love', or would it too have been a kind of baptism?

This book is written with passion – rather depressingly, all the marriages of Jews with non-Jews are made to come to grief – and its subject-matter cannot help, as always, being both unbearable and stirring at once. Yet it also remains curiously colourless, as though it has been translated from another language. Conversations and situations often either seem anachronistic or belong to no particular time or place. If the effect sought is the simplicity of epic, the price (for all the considerable research) is a loss of historical authenticity – which isn't, anyway, helped by things like a reference to 'Leningrad' in the 1870s or reports of talk about Auschwitz among German Jews as early as mid-1940. And what Jewish tailor, in South Wales in 1903, would speak of teaching as a 'prestigious profession', however much he meant it? One is left wondering: would the book's passion, and its wholesale defence of the Bindel principle, themselves have entirely survived a profounder application of the historical and novelistic imagination?

Conveniently exemplifying the tradition of Jewish idealism are Ruth Adler's family of Ledermans in **Beginning Again:** Rebecca and her husband Morris, non-stop worker for Party and Jewish causes. On the other hand, the trouble here is that stories about Stalin's camps and purges (the period is 1945-49) seem only to confirm the Ledermans' scorn for the self-serving lies of the capitalist press. In this respect, as in others, Rubens and Adler are in almost diametrical opposition.

Beginning Again is what blurb-writers call 'warm': in other words, there's a large family, everyone's always on top of everyone else, mealtimes are emotional occasions (though tea stands in for chicken soup), and Ai, English the old grandparents upstairs can't hardly speak. The novel has the breathlessness of the characters' inner thoughts, and an unshapeliness that seems to be that of closely-transcribed life. But the central situation is well done. Rebecca tries to maintain her huge house, look after her squabbling sons, save her brother from breakdown, evade (while yet always giving in to) her ageing parents, sustain her husband in his never-flagging ventures that are selfless and self-centred at once. And in the midst of all this, she also wants to make some room for herself, in which she can attempt to write and to repair her self-esteem. Some of the transcriptions of the vicious circles of marriage are close to life indeed. Male unreasonableness also leads to female unreasonableness; Rebecca is constantly accommodating but, without realising it, out of resentment makes Morris feel he's not a good enough husband or father, which in turn . . .

Eva Figes's novella, **Light,** is a picture in words of Claude Monet, his family, and his garden at Giverny in about 1900: the Japanese footbridge and water-lilies he is making the subjects of his own pictures in paint; the hopes and memories, moments of happiness and grief, that cross the minds of the various members of his complicated *ménage*. (Difficult sometimes to sort out the various 'he's' and 'she's'.) The story is also about the perception of light – the shifts of colour and shadow, from before dawn through a sun-filled day till after dusk, that produce the visible world. Light can't ever entirely be captured in words, and the result here is perhaps too much private phenomenological intensity. But the changing light also creates a sense of the passing of time, even of the apparent illusoriness of time; from behind Eva Figes's words, this sense emerges delicately, and successfully, as her real, hidden subject. □

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BIOGRAPHY
Rupert Christiansen

Footnote

The Formidable Miss Barnes
ANDREW FIELD *Secker* £12.95

Ezra Pound summed up Djuna Barnes in a limerick. He was not impressed – 'her blubbery prose had no fingers or toes' – but many others were. T. S. Eliot, her 'Uncle Tom', bought her novella *Nightwood* for Faber, edited it, and promoted her career. Other patrons included Edwin Muir and Dag Hammarskjöld; Samuel Beckett generously subsidised her last mouldering years in a tiny Greenwich Village apartment, shut up with a TV set, the *Oxford English Dictionary*, and not much else.

Hers was an unhappy life, and much of its interest comes from the milieux she inhabited. She was born in 1892 in New York State, the daughter of an unsuccessful painter who apparently tied her up and bartered her defloration with a farmhand. Her grandmother, a spiritualist and feminist of the sort that might have appeared in *The Bostonians*, was a dominating influence on her early years. After art college, she edged her way into Greenwich Village alongside Man Ray, John Reed, Edna St Vincent Millay, Edmund Wilson, and the bizarre salon of Mabel Dodge. She drew in decadent Beardsleyesque style and worked as a journalist, once submitting to force-feeding so as to write about the torture undergone by British suffragettes.

She followed her literary generation to Paris after the First World War and immersed herself in the customary quota of disastrous bisexual romances. Throughout the Twenties she lived on and off with an American sculptress, Thelma Wood, and their stormy alcoholic affair found its way into *Nightwood*. In the 1930s she moved to England under the wing of Peggy Guggenheim, where she spent some relatively stable years before war pushed her back to America and 40-odd remaining years of eccentric and asthmatic obscurity.

Apart from *Nightwood* (published in 1936), her artistic production was exiguous. She toiled for years over a complex religious dramatic epic *The Antiphon*, which Eliot encouraged without being able wholeheartedly to endorse the result. *Nightwood* itself reads like lugubrious Firbank, full of turgid *pensées* ('what is a ruin but Time easing itself of endurance?' is a fair example) and drippingly exotic personnel. A weakness of Andrew Field's otherwise riveting book is his lop-sided view of her achievement. He claims (excessively) that she influenced Faulkner, and that the richness of her language 'matches Shakespeare'. Nor does he bear out his thesis that 'the effect of her weak and wild father on the Barnes family and the ill-fated love between Barnes and Thelma Wood' traumatised her art. Field also tends needlessly to complicate chronology to the point of obscuring plain fact. But it is a life worth recording: Barnes may prove little more than a footnote to the history of modernism, but it will be a footnote which embroiders a major text. □

CRITICISM
David Montrose

Stubbornness

The Mirror of Criticism: Selected Reviews 1977-1982
GABRIEL JOSIPOVICI *Harvester* £16.95

The Mirror of Criticism ought to be an exemplary collection. For one thing, Josipovici's personal vision of the reviewer's task – described in a rather long-winded introduction – is admirable for its espousal of a direct response to works, without the interposition of system or preconception. For another, as a sensitive reader and lucid writer, Josipovici is suitably armed to put theory into practice, especially as the subjects of these reviews are mostly ones in which he has long evinced particular interest: Dante, Chaucer, Kafka, Walter Benjamin, Nabokov, Beckett, Bellow . . . Inevitably, though, the knowledge Josipovici brings to them works against the open-minded receptivity he considers ideal. This is mainly apparent in his criticism of criticism.

Josipovici is rightly distrustful of scholars pushing pet theses – a process which often involves twisting evidence to fit the argument – and is an unrelenting detector of their shortcomings. But, while a sceptical reviewer is certainly preferable to a gullible one, Josipovici occasionally gives the impression of being hard to convince because he has strong views of his own – which is scarcely surprising – that contrary opinions need to overturn. And there is no obvious instance here of that happening.

As a reviewer of fiction, too, Josipovici's views seem somewhat resistant to change, though this is probably less an indication of inflexibility than a worthy eschewal of literary faddishness. At any rate, he is not frightened to enthuse about old favourites of his – Borges, Robbe-Grillet – whom fashionable taste now considers slightly passé.

His only significant fault is an over-concentration on placing latest works in the wider context of the authors' oeuvres. A bottom-heavy excess of background often results. The same urge towards comprehensive statements informs Josipovici's non-fiction reviews, but there he usually has more space in which to operate and his wisdom is consequently saved from being spread too thin. □

FILMS
Alan Brien

Downhill racer

Koyaanisqatsi (U)
Lumière

Faced with a film that has an unpronounceable title, no characters and no story, no dialogue and no commentary, where the conventional backgrounds – landscape and city streets, machines and crowds – have advanced to hog the screen, this critic, anyway, must admit a problem.

Godfrey Reggio's album of moving pictures, choreographed to the music of Philip Glass, transmutes the realities of modern America into a succession of wonderful, weird metaphors that positively invite anyone with a typewriter to match them with words. What worries me is how to convey the excitement of this piece without making it seem like Pseud's Corner on celluloid.

Koyaanisqatsi opens on Hopi Indian cave paintings, ramshackle, childish structures. A Danikenian, searching for clues to visiting spacemen, might interpret them as prophetic glimpses of industrial civilisation – tumble-down sky-scrapers, abandoned Calor gas bottles, towers of tea-chests. Then we take to the air, racing across an empty moonscape of the Badlands; foothills like rotten teeth; mountains of rock-candy; sluggish, wormy rivers eating away the soft stone; deserts wind-sculpted into sprawling odalisques, geometrical and anthropoid, like Cubist nudes; cliffs nature has chiselled into steps, colonnades and temples; steaming plateaux where hot springs create misty wraiths. It reminds us of how alien and inhospitable much of the New World still remains and how the struggle to subdue this wilderness may account for much that seems callous and uncompromising in the American temperament.

There is a hint of the horror movie as we ride the speeded-up storms in the stratosphere, with clouds like boiling milk in which strange hearts pulse. Dawn and dusk whisk by in the flicker of the camera shutter and shadows wipe across the countryside below like gauzy curtains. We glimpse signs of humanity's invasion in rainbow strips of fruit and vegetables, meeting our first people sun-bathing beside great spherical crucibles, like concrete testicles.

Now we begin to see sights Leonardo and Shakespeare never knew, mirages and illusions only the camera can capture. A jet plane wobbling and rippling in a heat haze. Glassy tombstone buildings reflecting horizons of themselves. Cars rocket along multi-lane highways, jerking and jumping at night with the headlight eyes of maddened fireflies. A Martian might monitor our cities like this and think them enormous pin-ball machines.

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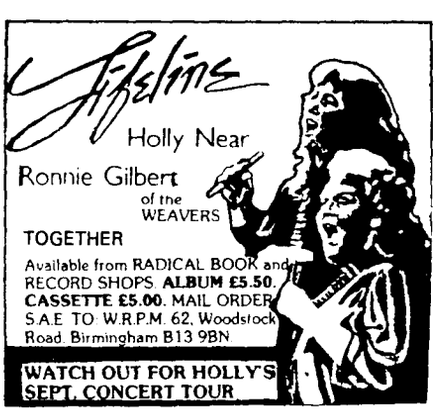
We go inside video games and TV sets. We become runaway supermarket trollies, turn into fast-food rissoles on factory conveyor belts. We roam ruined suburbs, mile-long avenues of decrepit new tenements like tenth-hand filing cabinets. We watch them demolished, falling like washing on a severed clothesline. There are times when it appears like a re-make of Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* – not the world Hitler would conquer, but a world that destroyed itself without him.

Not everything and everybody is injected with amphetamines. The crowds of scuttling insect shoppers and commuters fall into the Dead March, the funeral parade of *homo sapiens*, loping along to nowhere with appalling slowness, recalling Eliot on the masses crossing London Bridge – 'I did not know death had undone so many'. *Koyaanisqatsi* is Hopi Indian for 'life out of balance'. It could also be a sub-title to 'The Waste Land'.

We stop to watch faces, black and white, prosperous and poor, seeing on them, like Blake, marks of weakness, marks of woe, obliged in the stillness and sudden silence, the blank soundtrack hitting us like a thunder-clap, to invent their life-histories. *Koyaanisqatsi* never leaves us passive, but always invokes our comment. Glass's music, ranging from Tibetan temple bells to what could be Italian hurdy-gurdies, ominous chanted choruses and gay little dance tunes, sometimes made me want to shout 'Stop!'. But it remains always linked to the images, carrying us on even against our will.

The film embodies a built-in paradox, which occasionally nags at our attention. Its implicit indictment of technology out of control can only be brought to us by the same technology – a satellite view of our world in skeletal blueprint recorded by heat sensors; a moon the size of a floating island hiding behind an office block. But, like Marx in the *Communist Manifesto*, Reggio also pays tribute to the heroic endeavours of the bourgeois battle against nature – the huge pipelines, the enormous dams set against the giant earth-mover vanishing in its own exhaust smoke, the land swallowed by silos, cranes, oil drills and highways, the obligatory shot of the atom bomb erupting its massive cerebellum of grey matter.

In the end, the return to the Hopi Indian paintings, their legends of a world ended by dust and debris raining from the sky, seems almost a cop-out. But all along the way, it is a trip on a roller-coaster that makes you scream but hang on. □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WATCH OUT FOR HOLLY'S SEPT. CONCERT TOUR

Suzanne Farrell and Ib Andersen

DANCE
Stephanie Jordan

Top form

YOU MIGHT have resisted the unanimous encomiums of the daily critics for New York City Ballet at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, but I must urge you, seats permitting, to catch one of the last few performances. For this is undoubtedly one of the world's great companies on top form; its visit, if tinged with sadness in that its founder George Balanchine died earlier this year, showed us the dancers' commitment to his work and proof of their superb training in the classical style that he moulded.

A late Diaghilev discovery, the Russian Balanchine went to America in 1933 to set up the school and company that has fused classical style with American temperament. His company is unusual indeed, for one of its standing, in having a large repertory dominated so much by a single choreographer, be he arguably the most important of his time. Works by others like Jerome Robbins and now, more recently, Peter Martins (the present Ballet Master in Chief) have essentially had to assume Balanchine's choice of style – fleet and generous – of Americans who think big but have good manners and enjoy a sensible confidence. His is our most modern statement of classicism. More often than not, there is neither story nor décor; the essentials are dancing and music, the steps classical but an extension of 19th-century vocabulary, with an extraordinary density. Not since the last visit of Merce Cunningham's company have we seen such a pressure of information, such an enthusiastic flow of imagination.

During the first week, we have been treated to 13 works, eight British premières. There have been several contributions from those who will carry the company into the future as well as a good range of Balanchine, some of the finest: from two works to be revived by the RB next season, *Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 2* (1941), once called *Ballet Imperial*, with its direct reference to Petipa tradition, and *Agon* (1957), which displays the angularity and hip-free gymnasticism that Stravinsky's music was often to conjure from him, to gems of the 1980s.

It is a well-known fact that Balanchine found his chief inspiration in female dancers. For Suzanne Farrell, muse of the latter part of his career, he created **Mozartiana** two years ago. He made a grave (the costumes are predominantly black) but ultimately serene ballet, lightly textured, a pyramid in praise of his fully-blossomed ballerina. She is supported by Ib Andersen, four younger women, a *demi-caractère* male soloist, and four little girls, representatives of early stages on the balletic echelon. It is a rarified and enigmatic experience, curiously structured, a sombre Preghiera for Farrell, a light Gigue and Minuet for the other man and four women respectively, Theme and Variations, a series of solos and an *adage* duet for Farrell and Andersen, a gently sparkling Finale for everyone. The Theme and Variations become the centre of gravity of the piece, revealing so much that is great about Farrell's dancing, the amplitude of her gesture but modesty and precise attention to musical subtlety, the needle-like precision and melting of her pointes, the sustainment and impatient largesse of her legs, all encapsulated, fleetingly observed,

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darts of information in just a few dances. The sublime breadth we see again in her Adagio movement in Balanchine's *Symphony in C*.

Like *Mozartiana*, **Divertimento No. 15** is the re-working of a piece of music that Balanchine had treated earlier in his career, exquisite variations, solo or supported, here to display the talents of three male and five female soloists. But it is the company's other major ballerina Merrill Ashley who is brought most sharply into focus in this ballet, turning brilliantly, chasing her pointes and jumping, voracious for space: exuberance that can't be matched. She's the strongest, fastest dancer of a strong, fast company and, with her, one experiences the rare confidence that she can live dangerously and still hit everything right.

In the slighter **Ballade** (Fauré), essentially a *pas de deux* made public by a sprinkling of female *corps*, Balanchine draws an element of vulnerability out of her that we didn't see in the other work. Yet she's never fragile, indeed there's not an ounce of fragility about the way Balanchine women present themselves – Kyra Nichols, Heather Watts, not even the small Maria Calegari, supple but commanding with crystalline precision. The long, high-legged look that is today so misused elsewhere in the world is this company's birthright. No careless limb-flinging here. These dancers provide an intensity and sharpness of gesture that has resonance. It also has musicality for, given the most subtle conversations with music to perform, this is also the most musically alert of companies. The dancers understand that a full rhythmic response will transport them to unexpected levels of excitement, risk and accomplishment.

The men exude great intelligence and vigour, but as soloists rarely the power of the women (exceptions Sean Lavery and Mel Tomlinson). Prominent is the Danish contingent, Martins, Andersen and Adam Lüders, who have brought a poise, lightness and neatness of footwork to the male style. Andersen, the most technically disciplined in the company, is given many of the plum partnering roles, but he's young, slight in manner as well as stature, which can skew the balance oddly against the company's mature ballerinas. Ashley simply devours his presence. He has appeared most at home in Robbins' pieces, having fun without emotional complication.

Of Robbins, it must be said he has one of the finest theatrical instincts of any contemporary choreographer. Although his best work hasn't been shown during this two-week season, there has been much to admire. In **Piano Pieces**, a suite of dances with folk colourings to Tchaikovsky, the soloists emerge with great individuality, Andersen like a joker springing solos upon us from time to time.

We'd all heard that this year's **Glass Pieces** was a hit in New York. Set to music by the cultish Philip Glass, it thrives on the hypnotic repetition, random patterns and simple movement favoured by various New York post-moderns but absorbs elements of jazz dance (hints of the *West Side Story* Robbins), and of ritual, as bands of men and women confront each other and then interweave in complex evolutions (best seen from a raised seat) until the final statutory thrust of spreading hands in silhouette. It is superbly danced, impressively organised, but Robbins hasn't thoroughly assimilated his material or its provenance in order to define a secure statement of his own.

At best, Robbins matches and respects his music even if he does not always illuminate it, but his theatrical attitude can be an imposition when it does not emerge naturally from steps relating to music. In **Gershwin Concerto** especially, which seems to abstract the goings-on of urban youth, he relies too much on a certain Broadway perkiness, at the end pure flash, to carry lightweight choreographic invention.

Souvenir de Florence (Tchaikovsky) is by Ballet Master John Taras, and an interminable arrangement with obscure dramatics, some jolly Russian peasant references, under all too much white lace and flounces. Martins' **Concerto for Two Solo Pianos** (Stravinsky) looks like Balanchine's lucid calligraphy from several ballets scrambled into illegibility, unflattering to the dancers, fragmenting the score in the process. Interestingly, we have seen both these choreographers, like Robbins, in work that relies on music by Balanchine's own favourite composers. Neither has a distinctive voice, though Martins is undoubtedly working diligently to find one while he steers the company through its glorious present phase. □

THEATRE
Christopher Edwards

Dotty Lotte

Great and Small
BOTHO STRAUSS *Vaudeville*
The Devil's Gateway
SARAH DANIELS *Theatre Upstairs*

Advance reports of **Great and Small**, which has been touring the regions, suggested that the ghost of Peter O'Toole's gloriously awful *Macbeth* was about to stalk the West End. A star of the screen, Glenda Jackson, was being booed wherever she went. She was dreadful; the production was rubbish and, worst of all, the vehicle for it was a modern play in translation by some obscure German. It's easy to be patronising about 'provincial' audiences, but perhaps a lot of people did go expecting to see the 'screen' Glenda Jackson they associate with Walter Matthau and George Segal; when they were denied the expected cosy comedy of manners spiced with the inevitable dollop of adultery they were perplexed and annoyed. Other accounts suggest that people simply walked out of a work they found too diffuse and experimental and if this is so they probably deserve to be patronised; I thought it was a brilliant production, but neither diffuse nor experimental. I also thought that this playwright, whose work I've not had the chance to see before, is worth taking seriously.

Botho Strauss is a youngish German who has been both editor and drama critic of *Theater Heute*, and until recently occupied the post of dramaturge at the Berliner Schaubuhne. The play, although reasonably described in the programme as 'new', was actually first performed in 1979 at the Phoenix Theatre, New York. It deals with the psychic collapse of Lotte, a type familiar to anyone who knows the streets of modern cities – a disorientated batty dear who talks to herself and to anyone else within earshot and ends up as a bag lady. Strauss's Lotte is, actually, a more complex figure than this, although she does quite literally end up on society's rubbish heap at the end – sitting amid a pile of bursting black bin-liners in some side-street. She is a trusting, optimistic and courageous soul who, at every opportunity, thrusts herself at people in an attempt to find human warmth.

She will talk to them at their windows, their entry-phones, their bedroom doors, their family tables or at the bus stop. In exposing herself she exposes the fragmented lives of the people around her – her husband, a randy neighbour, the old lady who thinks Lotte is her long-lost daughter. Strauss leads us through a familiarly 'alien' modern urban landscape and proves to be a pessimistic if brutally funny guide. He is

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also completely unsentimental, a bit harshly insistent perhaps, but full of telling and precise observation – a wielder of the scalpel rather than the Teutonic hammer.

The play is constructed of separate expressionistic sketches linked together by the common thread of Lotte's hopeless pursuit of human contact. You first see her on a package tour in Morocco – sitting alone, trying to follow other people's conversation. What she says comes across like an interior monologue. She admonishes herself, jokes about herself, tells of her failed marriage and how she hasn't spoken to anyone for the whole of her holiday. Then you begin to realise that this manner of addressing herself is a surrogate form of conversation, and the start of her decline into the dotty Lotte she later becomes. .

Back home in Germany Lotte begins searching for her estranged husband, and here Voytek's excellent set serves as a potent metaphor in her journey to despair. The design is a huge functional box of opaque glass – sheer, and encased with pipes and scaffolding. When Lotte tracks down her husband to an apartment block each room she enters is like some sterile sci-fi habitation module. In a later outdoor scene when she is looking up an old school-friend, the voices she hears over the entry-phone materialise as spooky figures high up on stairways behind the glassy walls.

If the physical world is bleak and unresponsive the same is true of the humanity which inhabits it – the drunken sailor and his girl, the even drunker Turkish *gastarbeiter* (an arresting and acrobatic performance by Jeffrey Kissoon) and, tellingly, the disintegrating nuclear family Lotte encounters when visiting her brother. Keith Hack's direction keeps Lotte's increasingly nightmarish encounters under taut control; each scene ends in a 'freeze' of harsh white light which is held for an instant before stage-hands in yellow site-hats and yellow boots march in and shift the props. The end for Lotte comes with a collapse into religious delusion: she imagines she is one of the 36 righteous Gentiles, and takes her place in a queue of patients waiting to see a doctor.

Glenda Jackson's performance is one of the surest and most varied I have seen from her; she gets right to the pathetic heart of Lotte's nervy, naive and desperate character. She, the rest of the cast, the translation – I found the whole production very impressive and the more surprising for being launched outside the subsidised theatre: a remark intended as a compliment to the company's originality and ambitiousness.

I'm afraid the same cannot be said for **The Devil's Gateway** – a tendentious and wooden piece of 'social realism' in which the author tries to demonstrate how the lives of a number of working-class women are transformed by their involvement in Greenham Common. There are several moments of comic interest – mostly provided by Linda, a sort of council estate Mrs Malaprop – but the only scene which seemed inhabited by independent dramatic life was a hilarious dope-smoking session. For the rest, the dialogue just sounded like the author speaking in different voices. □

TELEVISION
Hugo Williams

Rock out

IMAGINE the dismay of the young executive who first thought of BBC-2's 22-hour **Rockathon** when he realised that his sarcastic suggestion had been taken seriously by producers tremulous of pension and was about to be given formlessness, if not tastefulness, by their back-room taxidermists. 'That is not it at all', he must have thought, 'that is not what I meant at all.' Introducer David Hepworth stood there at 3.15pm last Saturday, the rockathon stretching before him like 'The Waste Land'. As he spoke, he forced one hand after the other into the pockets of his stale jeans. They seemed to have shut up like clams in their embarrassment. Anne Nightingale was already looking tired as she outlined the show's strategy for holding on to our eyes for all those hours. Videos! Not *videos*, Annie? Not those nasty flat computerised slabs of PR you fling at us all the time? Apparently we were to be allowed to phone in and ask for our favourite one, if any, except that we weren't allowed to, because they'd already made their own selection and it was only up to us to vote for the order: Spandau/Duran/Bowie/etc or Bowie/Spandau/Duran/etc. So much for Fats Waller! Was it an economy measure or just a parody of the whole rigged world of pop? Early on to the video board was a fat ham called Meatloaf mugging to a noise called 'Bat Out of Hell'. Last was Elvis Costello. It's called democracy.

Like an over-anxious punter, the night climaxed almost instantly with a nice little jump band called Roman Holiday, which brought back memories of the long lost Chilli Willi and the Red Hot Peppers. Bathos came next with a ridiculous obeisance to Robert Nesta Marley, high-priest of adult-oriented reggae. The film was a model of the received-view type compilation: no facts, no crits, no early stuff. Just oohs and ahs. The son of an English army captain, Marley was 'the Third World's first superstar' and therefore absolved of anything so common as a past. What we got was a collage of mystic-eyed homages from various unnamed acolites: 'We shared a spiritual life with him', said a ganja-soaked rasta. 'The gospel was given to him, he was a man of God.' By the time he died, Marley's religiosity had lent his music a soupy, generalised feeling which attracted the MOR elements. It had lost touch with its roots in r'n'b. 'He looked on himself as a missionary', said a band-member, putting his finger on the trouble. 'In Australia we were running neck and neck with Billy Graham.'

Marley was taught a posthumous lesson in reggae rocking by white man Robert Palmer, next into the witness box. Palmer kept his head down and operated on the nod, feel and groove approach effectively eliminated by Marley's communing with the Universe. He walked off stage without a trace of side and we were submitted to another massive promo-job in the shape of 'Australia Now', a round-up of Aussie groups by one Pom Oliver. 'For the past 20 years our music has drawn its influences from the great rock centres of the Northern hemisphere', said Pom, suggesting that a change was in the air. Of 20 groups showcased, all but two were clones of existing models.

A random sample would throw up something like 'Australian Crawl', a band which 'has always been associated with water because three of the guys swim competitively'. (Shots of the guys receiving cups for surfing.) 'Sydney has this incredibly strong energy for writing and all that creative stuff', thought the singer. Boastfulness was a strong point among these musicians: 'Australian bands are easily as good, if not better, than bands coming out of England' (Euroglider), 'At least as good, if not better' (Split Enz), 'All the best bands come out of Melbourne' (a Melbourne band). The lads were right about one thing: 'There's a lot more optimism in Australia than overseas.'

After dear old 10cc in concert, we were back on the tour-bio trail with Randy Newman, the constipated man's Paul Simon. 'Joe picked up your ticket yesterday', an aide told him. 'He's going to give it to you tomorrow.' Tremendous, but I wasn't so riveted by the broody shots of the chap moving the piano about and the other chap who had to tune it. 'Every city is different', said the Magoo-like Newman uncertainly, but he was proved right: 'Stuff I'll play in Rotterdam, I won't touch in Amsterdam . . . I know we played Brussels because I heard from people who saw me . . .' Poor old Belgium! I wonder it doesn't break up like the Beatles and retire to France for all the support it gets from touring Americans. 'I'm too old for rock 'n' roll', said Randy at one lowpoint in the film. Nonsense, man. It's never too late to try something new.

It was DJ Wolfman Jack's night, if no one else's. He had a nice cameo in George Lucas's seminal **American Graffiti** (1973) and another in a good bio-pic of the doomed surf duo Jan and Dean, **Dead Man's Curve** (1978).

What an awful sight straight pop is though. Four chaps in t-shirts standing endlessly among boxes. It never works on telly. The speakers aren't good enough and it's so hypnotically boring to look at that your leg starts kicking after 20 minutes of TOTP, let alone 20 hours of these superstars. Pop on telly is part of the commercials for me. It's part of that mysterious process by which our public services act as PR to the famous: Duran, Spandau, Bowie, Beatles, Marley, Clapton, The Police. Perhaps we should be grateful. Sometime during the prolonged demonstrations of wee-wee music from Clapton and Hendrix I accidentally switched channels and there was Genesis concerting away on ITV, proving that there are even worse noises available if you use your imagination. □

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WEEKEND COMPETITION

No 2786 Set by D. C. A. Bradshaw

Seen recently on a wayside pulpit, 'A misery missed is a blessing to be counted'. Compers could surely provide yet further moral downlift by offering their own banal or jejune single-sentence slogans for such public display. Cribbing from real examples will be severely punished. By Friday 16 September, please.

No 2783 Set by C. Fever

Sonnets containing as many euphemisms as possible.

Report By Ms de Meaner

They tell me that it has been on the warm side here all summer, but that is no excuse. You are simply not concentrating – those of you who even bothered to drag yourselves as far as the post box that is. We had sonnets *about* the use of euphemism, sonnets filled with metaphor so vivid as to be the opposite of euphemistic, sonnets that simply weren't. And, of course, in these sluggish times the sum total of the subject matter – almost – was death, urination and sex. The demotic approach was clearly the most successful, as evidenced by the printed winners of a grudged eight green ones apiece.

On Friday, at the break of dawn,
The lady-dog that lives next door
Went to the toilet on my lawn,
As she had often done before.
Such action really can't be borne,
I've told my neighbour so a score
Of times. He treats my threats with scorn.
I'll liquidate him, that's for sure.
His private life is much too far
From what commends itself to me;
His wife and both his daughters are
No better than they ought to be.
They sit, no matter what the weather,
Sunbathing in the altogether.

JOHN SWEETMAN

Oh Mummy, Mrs Tibbs was not amused
When Patty Perkins had an accident.
She only asked if she could be excused –
She had a penny that she hadn't spent –
When Mrs Tibbs said 'Here's a pretty pass!
You should perform your little tasks before,
And not run out for tinkles from my class!
Are you alone, Patricia? Are there more
Who'd like to pay a visit, any who
Have not been to the little girls' room yet
To do a number one or number two?
In my form, let this precedent be set:
This is the very last time someone goes!'
And Patty sat there powdering her nose!

WILL BELLENGER

Dear Phyllis – Please excuse the scrawl. There's quite
A lot of news to tell. You know that Des
Has joined the boys in blue? He works at night,
Arresting girls who you-know, but he says
It's worth it for the challenge and the perks.
Poor Granny, I'm afraid, spends half the day
Locked in our smallest room. Her waterworks
Have played her up since Grandad passed away.
And guess what? Desmond's cousin, little Nancy,
Had to get married – so the story goes –
To Lionel, that librarian. Well, fancy!
We always thought that he was one of those.
Still, I'm not one to harbour any malice.
Must close now. Love to all. Yours ever, Alice.

BASIL RANSOME-DAVIES

FIRST PERSON

Anne Smith

Classes in morality

ABOUT A month ago in the *Sunday Times* colour supp. there was an article by Paul Johnson: 'Moral Decline. The Writing's on the Wall' (7 August). The general drift of his argument was that if Orwell had been alive today he would have been as much of a Thatcherite as Johnson himself.

I am generally too lazy to write to the press, except in self-defence, and made no exception on this occasion. I expected that the *Sunday Times* would have been inundated with letters of protest anyway, not just from Orwellians but from those like myself who would object violently to Johnson's line of argument:

> William Kay, in the most comprehensive study of the subject, *Moral Education: a Sociological Study of the Influence of Society, Home and School* (1975), found 'an abundance of evidence to confirm that culture determines morality'. There were . . . five 'elements of moral behaviour' . . . These were: the ability to make moral judgments; a preference for preferred benefits to immediate pleasures; the ability to see others as persons, and so consider their feelings; flexibility in interpreting general principles; and the ability to apply such principles creatively, so making morality dynamic.
>
> Kay identified these elements with middle-class culture . . . Orwell wanted to give the workers middle-class economic status. He and everyone else assumed the improved values would follow . . . What he did not foresee was that . . . The middle classes [would be] proletarianised. Tolerance of violence, obscene language and theft . . . now spread . . . and seeped upwards . . .

By the time I realised that no one was going to protest at this, it was too late to write in myself. But I am amazed that it should have been allowed to pass.

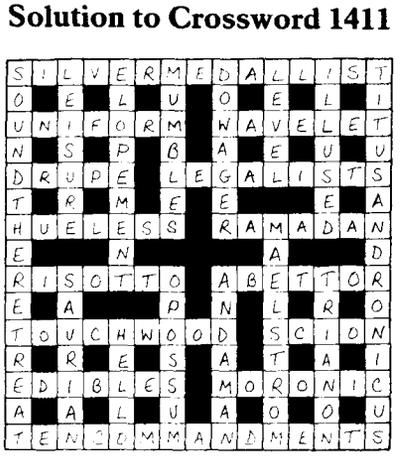
It never occurred to me that the middle class was more moral than the working class. Indeed, I grew up believing quite the reverse, with ample evidence on every side to confirm this. We made moral judgments – especially of the middle class: of the local grocer who gave short measure and watered the milk; of the chemist who couldn't pass any of his assistants without sexual harassment, yet was a pillar of the kirk; of the alcoholic minister who took all his solid food at parishioners' houses; of the school-teachers who couldn't survive a day without smacking at least three people on the backs of their knees with a ruler, and strapping another half-dozen.

And what were the insurance policies and endowment policies our parents strove to pay every week, if not 'preferred benefits'? Who could believe that the middle class are more able 'to see others as persons'? Certainly not me – they saw *me* as a freak, 'too bright for a miner's daughter – must be unstable'. 'Flexibility in interpreting general principles' – yes indeed! That meant when the bank manager's son stole it was a mistake, he wasn't himself that day, but when my working-class son stole apples he was half-way along the road to depravity. I think that was 'dynamic, creative morality' too.

Does the working class tolerate violence, obscene language and theft? I can still feel the ringing in my ears from skelps received for swearing and helping myself to the odd illicit stick of rock from the over-plenished counter in Woolies'. But if the slaps confirm the violence, then all I can say is that I still believe a good skelp is cathartic; it is a short sharp moral judgment which absolves the child of guilt and spares him the burden of social (not moral) conscience laid on middle-class children. On the other hand, I never saw at home the sort of violence middle-class teachers dished out, often unfairly, to myself and my schoolmates: why, we were punished so severely we might have been at public schools!

I have a lot of respect for Paul Johnson; I agree with many things he says. But it shocked me in this case that a former *NS* editor should so easily accept the findings of such an obviously blinkered, morally unimaginative, middle-class sociologist, just because he tells him what he wants to believe. As well say that middle-class materialism has ruined the working class. □

Solution to Crossword 1411



Prizewinners to 1411

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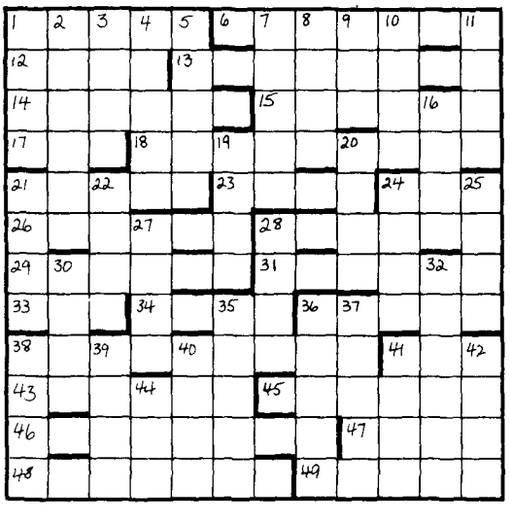
Salamanca 72

'All together now . . .'

PRIZES: £25 cheques for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Salamanca 72, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 4 October.



Each across row is filled with answers which are generally linked to a theme, clued in no special order as combined anagrams of an entire row, every answer beginning with a different letter. Down clues are normal but their answers must be entered in jumbled form. (The proper name at 11 and the foreign word at 24 are not in the dictionary.)

Name_____

Address_____

_____

ACROSS

i A CUTE GORILLA
ii DETECT NO TOIL
iii FAIR AT ADONIA
iv HAZEL IN HALLE
v I SWIPE SINNER
vi JEE UNIQUE LIE
vii LONELY LAD SAT
viii OCEAN LIKE TAR
ix PEBA APEX HINT
x ROAR AMID ASIA
xi SEA RULE HURTS
xii TAG ASS CLEVER

DOWN

1 Luck's mostly needed as boys initially step into these? (4)
2 Entering to annoy do produce mineral (6)
3 Tempestuous wind making girl expose head (4)
4 Metal substance surrounding one part of a flower (5)
5 English country garden has it, you see, going up to grassy area? (5)
7 Winsome lass married to copper, yet worried (5)
8 Illustrious fellow not taking in drug (4)
9 Shelter in gable end (3)
10 Here's a public fountain you'll gasp for (4)
11 Year's most profound US diplomatist (4)
16 One's pushed in nail – what's felt? (4)
19 Upheld by man returning prize (4)
20 Alpine glaciation is found in upward slopes out east (4)
21 View silver in weak einsteinium to be equal in value once (4)
22 Eastern military station volunteers to hold one (4)
24 Removing dear French from tokens gets you French (4)
25 Young girl, we hear, giving miserable utterance (4)
27 Hard, round, raised tip with a point – this? (4)
28 A prohibition, a stopper that's universal (4)
30 Page's aspect having pretentious air (4)
32 Peculiar Latin ring – here's tit for tat (6)
35 You find it on heads that escape rays (among Indians) (5)
36 Brought into contact with one loud cross-breed (5)
37 Indentical one as it were (5)
38 Round Scotland this island's one out of irregular chain (4)
39 This rustic vehicle used by unqualified driver (4)
40 Here's top of nut – *that* head's not soft on top (4)
41 Doctor Allan turning fat (4)
42 Abhor work down under which takes energy (4)
43 Yodel (without going to extremes) this lyric (3)

Solution to Salamanca 71

W	A	I	S	T	C	O	A	T	E	E	R
H	B	N	T	A	H	A	M	E	A	V	H
I	O	T	A	C	A	N	B	E	R	R	A
P	R	E	X	I	M	P	E	N	N	I	B
A	T	N	E	T	E	E	R	S	E	L	D
N	E	T	R	L	V	A	M	P	D	U	O
D	D	S	O	Y	E	R	U	M	E	N	S
D	I	T	I	O	N	S	L	A	V	S	P
E	C	O	N	U	T	E	A	S	E	T	H
R	E	N	I	T	E	N	T	K	N	E	E
R	D	E	N	R	B	I	T	S	E	E	R
Y	A	N	K	E	E	D	O	O	D	L	E

The unclued answers literally appear hidden in 'Chambers 1977 Edition'.

Prizewinners to Salamanca 71
Richard Curtis (Hamburg, W. Germany)
Lt V. Thomas (Hatfield)
A. J. M. Watt (Aberdeenshire)

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GROUPS/MEETINGS

A RALLY TO LAUNCH THE THEME OF THIS YEAR'S BRENT SHOW. Peace and Nuclear Disarmament, at Brent Town Hall on Tuesday 6 September at 7.30 p.m. Speakers include: GLC Leader Ken Livingstone, Joan Ruddock Chair CND, Rev. Kenneth Greet Secy Methodist Conference, Tom Durkin of Brent Trades Council, Leader of Brent Council Martin Coleman, Cllr Manibhai Patel Chair of Leisure Services. The Meeting will be chaired by Cllr Lawrie Nerva Chair of Brent's Nuclear Free Zone Working Party.

THEOSOPHY. S.a.e. for free pamphlets, book list, programme of activities. Sunday, 4 Sept., 8 p.m. Informal Q/A Meeting. 'What is Theosophy?' ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

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APPOINTMENTS

SOUTH GLAMORGAN WOMEN'S WORKSHOPS LTD.

The first women's training workshop in Wales will open in Cardiff in January 1984, offering part-time one year courses in computing and micro-electronics to women over the age of 25. The courses will cater specifically for the needs of women who have never worked, who wish to return to work after raising a family, or who are unemployed or threatened with unemployment. Free day-care facilities will be provided for trainees' children in the workshop. The workshop is funded by South Glamorgan County Council and it is anticipated that the European Social Fund will contribute financial support.

Experience and commitment to working within a collective, a firm belief in women's potential and capabilities, and organisational skills essential for the following vacancies:

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– teaching and/or industrial experience necessary. Tutors will play a key role in the final course design and its implementation

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Closing date – **26 Sept.** Interviews week beginning **10 Oct.**

Further information and application form from: South Glamorgan Women's Workshops, Incentive House, Adam Street, Cardiff (S.A.E. please).

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Further details may be obtained from the Librarian, National Union of Teachers, Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London WC1H 9BD, tel. 01-387 2442 x 133. Written applications should be returned by 16 September.

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LISTINGS

FRI 2 SEPTEMBER

EDINBURGH Peace – is it a feminist issue? Mixed workshop at Edinburgh Book Festival, 3-5pm, Marquee on Charlotte Sq Gdns, 50p. The opportunity for men and women to hear the issues surrounding women-only peace groups and discuss the implications. Also Violence, Non-violence and Feminism. Women only workshop. 7-10pm, Crosswinds, 2 Earl Grey St. Discussion of whether peace can or should be achieved by violent means and what connection there is between violence against women and violence against other countries. **Contact Cass McGrogan 031-556 5329.**

LONDON 'Trade Unions in Africa – The Struggle for Development'. Spkrs Ben Obua, of Nigerian Labour Congress. Carl Wright, Director of *Commonwealth Trade Union Council. Chair:* Joan Lestor, 7.30pm Royal Commonwealth Soc, Northumberland Ave, WC2. **Org World Development Movement 01-836 3672.**

LONDON (to 11 Sept) vigil 'No intervention in Central America' 9-7.30 daily, outside US Embassy, Grosvenor Square, W1. **Org NICA 01-226 6747 x 52.**

SAT 3 SEPTEMBER

OXFORD Operation Major: one day conference to discuss the ruthless police/DHSS swoop on homeless and unemployed in Oxford in Sept 1982 and subsequent events. Fee £1.50, less for unwaged. **Org Oxford Claimants Defence Committee. Contact CDC, 44b Princes St, Oxford 0865 723750.**

MANCHESTER Demonstration 'Our Families! Our Right'. Assemble Oxford Road, Mancunian Way Overpass (nr University) 2pm. **Org Bangladesh Divided Families Campaign, c/ Bangladesh Cultural Centre, Main Road, Oldham, Lancs. 061-678 4742.**

3-10 SEPT LONDON Festival for Peace and Freedom in Latin America. Sat 3rd, Purcell Room, 2.30-5pm Daniel Viglietti and others. Royal Festival Hall, 7.30pm Inti Illimani, John Williams. Box Office 01-928 3191. Sun 4th Cuban Ballet, London Contemporary Dance, Holly Near, Bloomsbury Theatre 7.30pm. Tickets £4. Box Office 01-387 9629, 5th-9th National Film Theatre, 10 separate screenings of progressive Latin American films incl *Battle of Chile* Box Office 01-928 3232. Fri 9th Caribbean Night at ULU, Malet St, 7pm Calypso, poems, reggae. Tickets £2.50. 01-272 4298. Sat 10th. All-Day Festival films, theatre, video, mime, painting, singers from El Salvador and Nicaragua, lots for children, £2/£1 unwaged at Imperial College. **Details CSC, 129 Seven Sisters Road, N7 01-272 4298.**

LONDON Launch of Camden Women's Bus. Special open day with Indian dancers, women's band, tape & slide show, 2-5pm, Winchester Fair, Winchester Project, Winchester Road, NW3.

LONDON 'Save what we fought for' demo to mark anniversary of the start of WWII. Assemble 10.30am Victoria Embankment (corner Horse Guards Ave), march 11am to Westminster Cathedral Conf Centre, meeting there 2-4pm. Spkrs Brig Michael Harbottle, Mgr Bruce Kent, the Dean of Bristol. **Org Ex-Services CND. Contact John Stanleigh 0272 562497.**

MON 5 SEPTEMBER

LONDON 'The origins of London gentrification 1960-1983' History Workshop Seminar. Spkrs Judith Allen, Charles Legg, 7.30pm Black Horse Pub, Rathbone Place, W1. **Org History Workshop.**

TUES 6 SEPTEMBER

BLACKPOOL 'Trade Unions and the Third World – The Struggle for Development' – TUC Congress Fringe Meeting. Spkrs incl Ben Obua, Moss Evans, 5.30pm Claremont Hotel, 270 North Promenade. **Org World Development Movement, Bedford Chambers, Covent Garden, London WC2E 8HA 01-836 3672.**

LONDON Meeting on Holloway Prison – women's experience (women only). 7.30pm, Central Library, 2 Fieldway Crescent, N5. **Org Islington Labour Women's Council. Contact Vivienne Whyte, 01-609 1040.**

WED 7 SEPTEMBER

LONDON Group meeting on acid rain and the establishment of a broad-based campaign, 7pm basement, 9 Poland St, W1. **Org SERA Public Health Group 01-439 3749.**

LONDON El Salvador Film benefit evening – films, spkrs (Jon Snow and others), refreshments, 7.30pm, Electric Cinema, Portobello Road, W11. Adm £2/£1 unwaged. **Org West London El Salvador Solidarity Campaign. Details Pete Rosner 01-743 3111 x 349 (days).**

THURS 8 SEPTEMBER

LONDON Public meeting on Labour's future. Spkr Neil Kinnock, 7.30pm Civic Suite, Wandsworth Town Hall. **Org Putney Labour Party 01-788 8961.**

8-9 SEPT LONDON Writers against nuclear weapons 24-hour reading vigil 12 noon Thurs, 8th to 12 noon, Fri 9th at St Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Sq. Readers incl James Cameron, Maureen Duffy, Gavin Ewart, Adrian Mitchell, Ian McEwan, Salman Rushdie, Emma Tennant, Jill Tweedie. **Org BARD (Book Action for Nuclear Disarmament). Details 0932 42274.**

FORTHCOMING

9 SEPT London Picket of Defense Sales Organisation, Soho Sq, W1, 11.45pm to highlight those being killed by arms sales. Bring own gravestone. (To coincide with Royal Navy Equipment Exhibition Portsmouth 12-16 Sept). **Org London Peace Action. Details Ann 01-633 0133 x 22/Keith 01-622 8426 (eves).**

10 SEPT London Forest Peace Festival non-7pm, Friends Meeting House, Bush Road, Leytonstone, E11. Adm £1 adults/unwaged and unaccompanied children 50p accompanied children free. **Org Waltham Forest CND. Details John Tonge/Rosemary Royds 01-520 0977.**

12-18 SEPT Wales A celebration & challenge – a week of events for women all over Wales includes exhibitions in libraries & bookshops focusing on Welsh women writers. Amenities for women in leisure centres to be given prominence. **Details: Nina Davies, People and Work Unit, AUEW House, 34-38 Stow Hill, Newport, Gwent 0633 62326.**

16 SEPT London Picket of British Aerospace Head Office, Pall Mall, W1, 12-2pm. **Org London Peace Action. Details Ann 01-633 0133 x 22/Keith 01-622 8426 (eves).**

17 SEPT London March, rally, demo for Palestine. Assemble 1.15pm, *Temple Gdns. National* and international spkrs at Hyde Park, 3pm. **Org Sabra & Shatilla First Anniversary Committee. Also Glasgow** Sabra/Shatila commemorative march & rally. Assemble Blythswood Sq, 12.00, march off 12.30 to Custom House Quay, PLO labour movement spkrs. **Org West of Scotland Friends of Palestine.**

17 SEPT London It can't happen again! – Labour's return. Local discn conf 10am-4.15pm, Brabant Road Community Centre, 2a Brabant Road, Wood Green, N22. Creche. Adm free. **Org Hornsey & Wood Green CLP. Details Geoff Sheridan 01-703 5298 (day).**

21 SEPT London 'ILEA and the Tory threat'. Spkr Stephen Benn, 7.30pm, Rm 2, Mary Ward House, 5 Tavistock Place, WC1. All welcome. **Org Central London Fabian Society.**

23 SEPT Oxford Conf: 'Information and nuclear issues – the role of the academic'. All welcome. **Details & booking: Nigel Gardner 0865 241085/241791.**

24 SEPT Stirling Meeting to discuss launch of new monthly paper of the Left in Scotland, 'Scottish Socialist'. 12-5pm Cowance Centre. **Details Jean Mackenzie, 59 Durward Avenue, Glasgow G41, 041-649 8958.**

24 SEPT London Open University CND day school, 11am Parsifal College, Finchley Road. Spkrs, Workshops, films. Accom available. **Details Chris Whatton, 76 Hackness Road, Scarborough.**

29 SEPT London for 10 weeks. 'Women at work' evg course, 7-9pm, 179 Deptford High Street, SE8. Adm £1 unwaged/£8 waged. Will cover current position of women in labour market, education & training with particular focus on Lewisham. Creche & transport home available. Sponsored by Goldsmiths' College. **Details: 01-691 3550.**

22 OCT London 'No cruise, no Trident, Freeze the arms race. Nuclear weapons are no defence.' CND demo to coincide with worldwide week of actions by the peace movement. Assemble Victoria Embankment (between Embankment & Blackfriars tubes) 11am. Transport arranged from every part of UK. **Contact your local CND or peace group for details of national CND 01-263 0977.**

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Sunday: T Benn, A Barnett, *S Rowbotham; C Benn on YTS–training or exploitation? J Palmer, A Lomas MP on the Common Market; G Hodgson, T Ali on what next for the Labour left? L De Groot, D Sullivan, I Beavis on how we defend services; C Harwood on women's peace movement; M Rustin on politics of PR

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